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Annie B. Keslar.

Hills

WHISPERINGS OF TIME.

BY

DELIA M. HILLS.

SAN FRANCISCO:

H. KELLER & CO.

1878.

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I AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATE

This little Volume

To my Mother.

Seven Gables, Apr. 5, 1949

PREFACE.

MEMORY, ever busy in the chambers of the brain,
Brings the past before me vividly again;
Holds to view a picture of the flying years,
Painted on the canvas, midst our falling tears:
Gathers unforgotten songs of other days—
All their wildest music, all their sweetest lays;
And tolls, o'er buried dreams, its saddened knell;
And folds, around my heart, its weird and mystic spell.

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WHISPERINGS OF TIME.

THE darkness was melting to silver-gray,
At the magic touch of the coming day;
When I heard the sound of wings, going by,
The trembling echo of a tearless sigh;
And a whisper, so weird, and yet, so near,
That it faintly fell on my listening ear:
And I knew it was Time, in his onward flight,
Gathering the hours in the morn's golden light.

Quickly and swiftly, I slipped from my cot,
And lurked in Time's shadow with weeping *Thought*;
For I saw that *Thought* followed in his train,
Over the ocean, and over the plain;
And I knew they had kept their watch together,
Through the darksome night, and the stormy weather:
And as weary watchers, they had toiled and wept,
While the hours went by, and the sleeping world slept.

And I saw, by the gleam of the rosy light,
The falling of sand, of a pearly white;

It fell from a cup in Time's giant hand,
When he waved his sceptre over the land:
So, I said to myself, "I will gather up
The sand-drops, which fall from his brimming cup;
And hour-glasses I'll fill with that shining sand,
Then scatter them, afar, over all the land."

"*Not so fast*," whispered Time, "from the cup, I hold,
The sand-drops that fall are minus the gold,
Which measures the hours, through the morning's prime,
And the darkening night of this earthly clime.

"I hold in my cup, the life of the hour,
Those sand-drops, you see, have lost their power;
You cannot undo the work, *I* have done,
Nor gather, again, the hours that are gone.

"*You* may trace on each, as you pass with me,
A message so fair, he, who runs, may see;
The impress *I'll* leave, as I gather the hour,
For its life is mine—that's my birth-right dower."

The morning turned to a misty gray;
The present faded and fled away;
A change o'er the face of nature swept,
As the shadow o'er the dial crept;
And all alone with my mystic guide,
I stemmed the rush of the coming tide;

And up the stream of the years gone by,
In a fairy shallop, did fleetly fly.

Dim in the distance the future lay;
The past alone must hold regal sway;
So, on, still on, 'neath the starry sheen,
Our shallop, so lightly, did careen;
Till in a harbor, at dawn of day,
Where naught around but the forests lay,
Our shallop we left; the deed was done—
The past was mine—the goal I had won.

Beyond the seas had the story been told,—
And from home to home had the tidings rolled,—
Of a land, afar, toward the setting sun—
"We'll seek it," said they, "ere our life is done."

Sweeping o'er seas, to that unknown land,
Is a hardy crew, a praying band;
But the seas are tolling a funeral dirge;
Bear it, O winds, o'er the rolling surge.

A mist from the heavens earthward rolls,
And wraps the forest, and ice-clad knolls;
And hoary pines like sentinels stand,
Guarding the ports of that unknown land.
The breakers dash with an angry roar,
And quiver far up the rock-bound shore;

The tempest speeds in the might of its wrath,
And sweeps through forests, that crown my path.

The red man stands with a spear in his hand,
For the voice of prayer is heard in the land:
'Tis not the voice of *his* people or race,
So, he reads his doom in the white man's face.

The rock-bound shore fades away from sight;
The breakers fade in the hazy light;
No longer I see the dashing spray
In the harbor, where our shallop lay;
For our shallop veered with the ebbing tide:
I am sailing down, with my mystic guide!

Floating along, while the changing day
Tells of a race, that is passing away:
But another race of *stalwart* men,
Pass o'er the mountain, and down the glen.

The monarch oak, in his stately pride,
Feels the thrill of the on-rushing tide,
And bows his head; for a ruling hand
Is sweeping on, through the western land.

The dashing stream has a prouder tone,
As it speeds, far on, through forest zone;

For it hears the whirr of the merry wheel,
And reflects the gleam of shining steel.

Hark! a murmur is heard on every hand;
Strangers' feet are walking the glowing sand;
Through the darkening night a messenger flies,
For a cloud he sees in the eastern skies.

'Tis gathering fast, in its might and its power:
Will the people stand in the trying hour,
And battle for freedom, for home, for land,
Against the strength of a warrior band?

Lo! a joyous shout, so loud, and so long,
Peals forth from the great and mighty throng;
Bear it, O winds, from the east to the west,
From the north to the south, before ye rest!
Let the waiting nations arise and know,
That for Freedom's cause, we had struck the blow:
Our country is free! our homesteads are free!
Roll it on, O winds, o'er the rolling sea!

From *this day and this hour* we date our birth,
Ring it forth, O bells, over all the earth!
A nation is born on the western shore!
A nation, to live, till earth is no more!
Baptized she may be in blood, and in tears,
She will write her record, through coming years;

And on, still on, through the cycles of Time,
Till the earth has rounded her golden prime.

Floating along with my mystic guide,
Watching the flow of Ohio's tide;
I hear the dip of a muffled oar—
A canoe flits in, to the silent shore!
And the red man bows him in despair;
For an echo comes on the evening air.

Plowing the waves of *his own* loved stream,—
Fitfully flashing in moonlit gleam,—
A boat sweeps down,—with its hardy crew,—
In the quiet hush of the dropping dew:
'Tis enough for him, his heart stands still,
Broke is his power, and crushed is his will.

I hear the rush of the railway train,
Speeding along o'er the western plain;
The tread of progress sounding from far;
For *thought* is yoked to the lightning's car:
The spire and steeple gleam through the trees;
And voices are borne on the summer breeze.

The red man's power is fading away!
He reads his fate in the coming day!
He wipes a tear from his kindling eye;
Takes one last look, where his loved ones lie;

Then, turns his back on his hunting ground:
His heart has received a silent wound.

Looking afar o'er the prairie wide,
I catch the gleam of a rolling tide;
'Tis sweeping on, to the setting sun,
From early morn till the day is done;
Enchantments of home are all forgot;
To seek for wealth is the only thought.

Only *yester-eve*, the bright *sun* set,
As a dusky band in council met;
To-day, it shines on cities untold,
Dotting like diamonds the land of gold.

Still, floating on, with my mystic guide,
In the quiet hush of the evening-tide;
Strange sounds I hear; strange sights I see;
Can this be the home, the land of the free?

Cities have grown, in their grandeur and pride,
Where forest monarchs the tempest defied;
And a people, mighty and strong, have grown
From the tiny seed, which oppression had sown:
But God looks down, in the strength of his might,
On the evil, hidden away from the light.

The scene is changing, and one by one,
Drifting along toward the setting sun,
Are armies passing—the gleam I see
Of burnished steel 'neath the waving tree:
Passing, repassing, both, to and fro,
With deadly stroke and with deadly blow.

As cloud meets cloud, in the vaulted skies,
And lightning-charged, through the ether flies;
So, army meets army in close array,
And the battle rages till close of day;
And, through the darkness of falling night,
Our track we trace, by the watch-fires' light.

Midnight draws near in the halls of power;
A deed is impressed on the passing hour;
And Time reaches out, as we pass along;
And the news is borne to a waiting throng.

The day had closed on a sable band,
Bowing beneath the oppressor's hand;
The *morning dawns* on a race set free;
Sweep the news, O winds, o'er the rolling sea!
The sin that blotted America's fame,
Is swept from the land, erased from her name.

Winding along from the east to the west,
A cortege passes, in mourning dressed;

A hush has fallen over *all* lands,
And draped in mourning, our nation stands;
And the veil lifts not, as the throng rolls on;
For our nation's head to the grave is gone.

Slowly floating, with my mystic guide,
Adown the stream, with the ebbing tide,
I see the war-clouds, melting away,
Before the dawn of the coming day:
No *longer* resounds the war's alarms;
No *longer* I hear the clash of arms;
For, "Peace" is shouted from shore to shore;
'Tis heard far above the breaker's roar.

The stars and stripes, on the breeze unfurled,
Tell the glad news to the waiting world:
And the listening nations hear the sound
Of Freedom, treading America's ground:
It will sound ever on, as the years roll by;
It will sound ever on, as the ages fly.

Sweeping, far down, with my mystic guide,
I feel the rush of the ebbing tide;
And the past is flitting far away,
The present is holding regal sway.

I hear the chimes in the old church tower,
Tolling a dirge on the midnight hour!
A cycle has filled Time's cup with gold!—
One hundred years o'er his path have rolled,
Since we wrote the date of our nation's birth;
And pealed the glad news to the waiting earth.

THE MARCH OF TIME.

SHORELESSLY, noiselessly, through infinite space,
Rolls on the great ocean of chaotic mass;
A vast, unfathomable, boundless abyss.

Above the dark gloom, o'er its intricate maze,
In the heaven of heavens reigns the Ancient of Days;
And with sleepless eye the darkness He surveys.

His piercing eye beholds an embryo impearled,
As through the darkening void the moving mass is hurled:
He speaks, the dark, chaotic mass yields up a world.

The deep, responsive, moves beneath His Spirit's sway;
Darkness heeds, dissolves, and vanishes away;
Light hears, "Let there be light," and hastens to obey.

And, through the eternal space God's voice is heard;
The hosts of heaven within their books record
"Light, *Day*," and "darkness, *Night*," obedient to His word.

Heavily armored and shod for march, comes Time;
And the morning, and the evening, ring the chime
Of the first day, born in his circuit sublime.

Again, God's voice is heard, "a firmament shall be;"
The troubled waters move, divide, and roll away:
The firmament of Heaven records the second day.

Once more, God speaks, the waters gather to one place,
Dry land appears, Earth on her orbit rolls through space,
And grass, and trees, and flowers spring up apace.

He speaks again—while waiting angels round the throne
Record the deed—and answering to His call, the sun,
The moon, and stars, their endless orbits run.

Not all is written yet; the records must proclaim
The crowning work of God, in one harmonious psalm:
They wait—*man* comes, the image of the Great I Am.

And still, God rests not from his work; the day of days
Has not yet come; the angels stand in great amaze,
Till dawning of the seventh—the Sabbath Day of Praise.

And on, Time marches through the varying scene,
Unspent of strength, unshorn of power to reign,
With footprints left on mount, and hill, and plain.

Heaven's windows open, the rains descend anon;
They cease; o'er the flood an olive branch is borne;
Indelible way-mark of the days agone.

A Glory, not of earth, rests on Judea's plain;
And shepherds see the heavenly host, and hear the strain—
"Glory to God, on earth, peace, good will to men."

"'Tis midnight," Time whispers to the olive leaf,—
When Christ the Redeemer prays in deepest grief,—
Then gathers up the sobbing hours, and binds a golden sheaf.

A fearful moment; Time weeps—hushed is his tread—
Earth trembles—rocks are rent—the graves give up their dead—
On Calvary's hight, for man, Christ's blood is shed.

And ever on, through all the changing scenes of life,
Through peace, through tumult, and through rancorous strife,
Time presses, gathering up the years with changes rife.

Time marches in the lightning's flash, which invades
Ocean's darkened realm, and gloomy palisades;
And ties the continents with its fiery threads.

He shouts in the whistle of the railway train;
And from Atlantic's shore, westward rolls the strain,
Till the peaceful Pacific joins the refrain.

He points to a narrow isthmus, and whispers low
To the listening waters— "Say, do ye know,
A path may be cut, where bright waters may flow?"

He lingers not, but he hears a weird greeting,—
A low, solemn sound o'er the land is flitting—
And the echo comes, of the blue waves meeting.

And a choral of praise floats from shore to shore,
As wave blends with wave in one mighty roar,
Uniting the oceans till time be no more.

The costliest pearls from the mermaids' wild homes;
The tracings of Art through the loftiest domes;
And the bright gems of Ophir mark where he roams.

His steps are traced, — like rain-drops from summer shower,—
On christianization's grand, beautiful flower;
And *its* petals reflect the gleam of his power.

And each stamen, sign of a nation's renown,
And the pistil bearing a star-blazoned crown,
Mark his stately tread and the work he has done.

And the emblems of nations will ever reveal,
How his giant fingers imprint on each seal,
"United we stand. To all, peace and good will."

But far down in the depths of that giant flower,
Lies the scroll of the world, with its garnered dower,
Which is almost rolled up, by Time's secret power.

THE DEPTHS BEYOND.

I watch the stars, as they come and go,
In the hazy depths of the midnight sky;
While the night-winds sing a requiem low,
And the fleecy clouds go hurrying by:
  And shine they bright, or shine they dim,
  As the clouds flit o'er the moon's pale rim,
    I think of the depths beyond.

I wander forth when the *moon* grows dim,
And daylight dawns in the eastern sky;
And my thoughts arise in praise to Him,
Who hung the glittering stars on high;
  And I watch them, as, one by one,
  They vanish away before the sun;
    And, *think* of the depths beyond.

I wonder oft, who those depths will explore,
And I think of the future, *The Evermore,*
When man will be given the power to scan,
And fathom the depth of our Maker's plan;
  And traverse the fields of boundless space,
  And watch the worlds in their flying race,
    And, *learn* of the depths beyond.

OUR LIFE.

AS a leaf is cast on the wave,
And by restless tide borne on,
Till it finds in the ocean a grave,
At the setting of the sun:

Are our life-boats launched from the sand;
And we sail with the ebbing tide,
But *we* seek the shores of *that land*,
Which lies on the other side.

As a pebble, dropped in the stream,
Makes the waves in eddies reach,
And in vapory dew-drops gleam
On the shining, sandy beach:

So, our life-thoughts drop in the stream,
And the surging billows roll on;—
But we see their silvery gleam,
Ere our earthly toil is done.

And, when the circling eddies have rolled
Their ocean of truth to land;
The whole of our life will be told,
If they reach from strand to strand.

THE STORY OF THE ROCK.

Near the base of the Blue Ridge, on the bank of a river, is a rock marked with human foot-prints; the steps of a child not more than five years old. —*Ladies' Repository.*

NOT on a tablet of marble,
  Was the story told, that day,
Of the little one, that wandered
  Away from its home in play.

But the plastic clay had offered
  A ground-work for little feet;
And the river's rushing waters
  Rendered the impress complete.

Seven times—did those tiny feet
  Totter and slip on the brink:
Seven times—then from light of day,
  Beneath the dark waves, they sink.

And over the foot-prints, *there* made,
    The river, for half the years,
Has swept with its rushing waters;
  And changed the clay with its tears.

It wept for the deed it had done—
  For the life, it could not save,
So in tender, pitying love,
  It told the tale by its wave.

* * * * * * *

On a tablet of solid rock,
  Are the *foot-prints* seen to-day,
Which tell of the child that's sleeping:
  Though ages have rolled away.

THE YEARS STOOD SIDE BY SIDE.

I HEARD a voice, resounding through the spheres!
'Twas silent—and side by side stood the years,
Mottled and marred with rust and grimy mold:—
I numbered them, as o'er life's path they rolled.

None were missing; but to my earnest gaze,
Not only years, but months, and weeks, and days;
Even *moments* and *seconds* all were there,
Circle within circle, perfect and fair.

And *I*, through each could walk;
And the deeds were open there, for my inspection.

But, "Why," thought I, "this strange, this sad array?
This earnest of the final judgment day?
For what intent or purpose is it given,—
This side the boundary line of heaven,—
To *me*, to look again upon the years
With all their yearnings, and their secret fears?"
For I had deemed *them*, sleeping in their graves
With all their errors hid 'neath Time's dark waves.

Then spoke the voice in accents, soft and low,
"Canst thou no meaning see? And must thou know?
Go back, trace through each year, its months, its days,—
'He learneth most, and best, who best obeys,'—
And, then, thou there wilt learn, by what is done,
To better live; or better still, by what's undone.

"For every deed is there, and word, and thought,
Yea, every work, which by thy hand was wrought:
For deeds still live in memory of man,
This is the workings of the Maker's plan;

"And words remain,—although from mind they pass,
As passes the dew from the new-mown grass,—
For the impress, thereof, will never die;
'Tis living here—'t will live beyond the sky.

"And thought, undying, lives; 'tis part of heaven;
Which here, below, to mortals has been given:
And works still live; to thee, the years will show
The influence uneffaceable, below;
And *it* will live, till time shall be no more,
And, then, transplanted, live forevermore.

"Go thou, and there a lesson learn, and wiser grow,
With wisdom,—not from earthly fount,—but from above,
And miss not one; but trace, through all the years below;
The path that thou hast trod—and learn, that God is Love."

Over *one* year, of childhood's *gilded* years,
There hung a cloud, weighed down by burning tears:
And all the years, and months, and weeks, and days,—
As if responsive to my earnest gaze,—
Pointed to when the snow-drops were in bloom;
And, then, I learned what meant *the open tomb.*

When, bending earthward, on radiant wing,
In the golden hush of a morn in Spring,
An angel came; and took, from out that day,
The sunlight fair, and left a shadow there;
And, when the angel heavenward bent his way,
He bore the fairest of the earthly fair.

One link was missing from the chain,
Affection wove. Shall e'er again,—
On shores of everlasting bliss,—
The link be found, which angels bore from this?

Slowly descending from the courts of heaven,
A chain I saw—not all the links were given
To my keeping: for *one* in the seraph-band
Held the missing link in his angel hand.

The lesson was learned, not a broken band,
Only a part had gone to the *better land.*

* * * * * * *

'Twas New Year's day! and o'er the threshold
Of the silent years, with rapt and eager gaze,
I passed,—with dawning of the year,—to unfold
The workings of the mind in childhood's days;
Ere pleasures cloyed; and onward, through the rush
Of coming years, to solve anew this problem:
For, each moment, speeding by, doth help to brush
The dew from children's sunny brow, and teach *them*:—
That twilight of child-life is very near:
And so, turning, I gazed upon the year,
And not content, I turned and looked again,—
For all our joys grow brighter as they wane;—
And *there*, I saw two children, hand in hand,
Where sunbeams played upon the whitening sand;
With wild flowers, gathered in the sunny vale,
Where birds and butterflies hold carnival;
And to the brooklet's mossy banks they come,
As setting sun returns them to their home;
And o'er the stepping stones, from flower-crowned hill
To dusty road, they cross the tiny rill;
And in the quiet hush at close of day,
They bend their steps and tread the homeward way:
Even as the youth,—o'er stepping stones of years,
Forgetting all his secret hopes and fears,—
Crosses the unseen boundary line of time,
From childhood's years to manhood's golden prime;
And nearer draws, as fleeting days roll round,
To tread the path, which leads to holy ground.

And, then and there; I learned of bitter hours,
When the life-cup is filled, which we call ours;
And from its deepest depths, we gather strength
To tread the life-path to its farthest length;
And learn, anew, the wisdom of God's plan,
In dealing thus, with weak and sinful man.

Musing, I paused.— My pathway,— which had led
Under bright skies, along the verdant mead
And pleasant ways,— seemed all at once to change;
And life was, all at once, so passing strange.

But 'midst it all, I knew, the path of life,—
With all its sunshine, and its shadow rife,—
Was planned by God, for each and every one,
Long ere the earth was made, or burning sun.

Far back in counsels of eternal might,—
While earth was darkness and chaotic night,—
He marked the path, that every one should tread;
And over all, his loving kindness spread.

Each day of sorrow, and of sadness here,
And, where should fall the bitter, burning tear,
Were known to *Him*; our God of might and power;
And strength He gives to each, in trial's hour.

And, when our hearts, in faith and prayer, arise
To Him, who hears the pleading sinner's cries;

Descending from the great eternal Throne,
God's Spirit comes, and answers to our own
And teaches us, that God is God alone.

And strength, anew, he grants us, day by day,
To tread life's strange, and dark, and hidden way;
And, when we onward rush—forget our God—
He draws us to himself, by chastening rod.

And, when I walked through years, and by my side
An angel from the world beyond the tide,
Unseen by mortal eye; and, all unheard
By mortal ear, a sound through the vine-leaves stirred;
I knew, that a heavenly summons had come
Bidding *them*, up *There* to the "Harvest Home."

And, so, one by one, with the rolling years,
They passed to that *land*, where there fall no tears.—

And this lesson was left, on my heart impressed,
From the rolling years as they onward passed;
Our life is brief—a year—a month—a day
May tell it all—and *we* may pass away.

Yet this lesson, of import deeper still,
Was learned by me— "*He doeth all things well.*"

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And my walk, I still continued; and there, spread
In panoramic view, were forms and scenes
Of later years; and, as I walked, I read—
Read, o'er and o'er again, what lay unseen
To other eyes; and with regret, so deep, and *tears*,
I lived *again*, those deeds of later years;
And learned, that moments, unimproved, may be
A stumbling stone to other ones than me.

And, as an echo, wandering 'mong the hills,
Continues ever more its solemn peals;
When lost it may be, to dull, mortal ear,
It still resounds throughout the upper sphere:
So, precious moments, unimproved by me,
Have left their *influence* on time's rolling sea;
And on, *it* speeds, through daylight and through dark,
Crossing the pathway of some lonely bark:—
Some weary wanderer,—on the trackless main,
Seeking the light, that leads to heavenly plain,—
May feel the loss, and sadly turn away;
For *other hand* to point to Christ, "The Way."

WE FLOAT WITH THE TIDE TO-DAY.

O RIVER, flowing river!
Gliding so swiftly away;
The reeds on thy sunny banks quiver,
Through the long, long summer day.

And slowly o'er thy waters,
We float with the tide to-day;
While the breeze through the willow loiters,
To sing us a mournful lay.

O river, flowing river!
We hear not the wind's low sighing;
But we hear, through the pines that shiver,
A wail for the early dying.

Afar neath the willow's shadow,
The sorrowing mourners bend;
And we catch the lingering echo,
As the weeping prayers ascend.

The prayers go floating onward,—
Far beyond the stream of Time,—
So swiftly floating, onward, upward,
To that pure and better clime.

And we see another river,
Laving a far-away shore;
Where the golden sunbeams quiver,
Through the *Ever, Evermore*—

And far through the misty haze,
We catch the gleam of an oar—
For the light from the Ancient of Days
Illumines that distant shore.

And angels with love-lit eyes,
Are guiding a tiny boat
To that radiant harbor, which lies
Where eternal sunbeams float.

For the wailing prayers, ascending,
Had reached that heavenly goal;
And our Savior, tenderly bending,
Had gathered that tiny soul

ROUND THE HEARTH-STONE.

IN the gathering twilight, when the day is done,
And the fleeting moments pass by, one by one;
Round the hearth we gather, talking of the past;
Of the autumn's glory, flitting by so fast;
Of the hoary winter, drawing on apace,
Frost and snowflakes gathering in his cold embrace;
Of the moment coming; when the falling tear
Lingers for an instant o'er the dying year.

In the gathering darkness, while the night comes on,
Drawing close her curtain till the morning dawn;
By the embers glowing, linger we, for Love
Lights the gloomy darkness; lifts our hearts above;
Paves the golden pathway; where our thoughts may tread
Midst the lamps of heaven in the vault o'er-head;
Up the star-lit ladder leads them, step by step,
To the open portals through which angels sweep.

With the season's passing, years will come and go,
Writing, without ceasing, change on cheek and brow;
Still we often gather round the hearth-stone, when
Darkness gathers, softly, round the homes of men:
For the faith of heaven, filled with Love divine,
Opes the gates of glory; lets the sunlight shine;
Leads our thoughts, triumphant, to the throne of grace;
Fills our hearts, o'er-flowing, full of love and praise.

We Know Not Now, But We Shall Know Hereafter.

'TWAS dawn of morn; a morn in early spring;
A purple haze hung o'er the mountain tops;
A rosy glow swept up the eastern sky,
And flashed, and played, along the tree-clad hills,
Till valley-land was bathed in green and gold,
And river shone with rose-light of the sky;
When from her couch a youthful maiden came;
The bloom of life's fresh hours was on her cheek,
And health, and beauty, sat upon her brow:
She came to catch the gleam of rosy light,
Which played o'er all the vale, and hill, and sky.

Not many years had passed o'er her young head,
Yet on her brow, regal and fair, was traced
By hand unseen, that, which proclaimed her heart
In truths of Holy Writ to be well versed:
Invisible to mortal eye, and known
Only to Him, who planned the universe,
A pathway had, with tender care, been marked,
And there, in childhood's glowing hours, her feet
Had turned, guided by that Almighty Hand
Which,—through the strange and intricate mazes
Of life,—never falters, and never errs.

She knew not, yet, the purpose of her life;
Nor, that the threads of her young life were links
In a great chain, which, in a few, short years
At most, would bind her to another world:
But there was work to do: 'tis not great deeds,
Alone, which fill the measure of our lives:
For, in each strain there are some chords, which sing
A minor melody; while others tuned
To higher pitch, still breathe a cadence sweet:
And, so, through many a life,—whose short career
Death terminates, ere we think the life begun,—
We trace a minor melody which soothes,
And alleviates all surrounding hearts:
And, here and there, a word is spoken, which,—
In harmony with all the deeds of life,—
Tells its own tale, and *thus* the work is done;
The mission is fulfilled; and then—God calls;
And *that* young soul, so full of high-born trust,
Is gathered to its God; and none can tell,—
Until the judgment day, when earth yields up
Her millions,—how much, for God's great garner,
That soul had sowed, and reaped.

MY SISTER AURA.

AND thou art here no more, my sister!
Many years have gone,—gone, forever gone
Into the dark, dim past,—since thou wert here:
And still, I miss thee.

In the bright flush of rosy morn,
When nature wakes to life and light again,
I miss thee, *and*, I yearn to call thee back
To earth, from realms above. In night's still hour,
When all around is hushed, I hear thy voice,
And feel thy hand upon my brow, and, know,
It is not all a dream.

For, from
The spirit-world, I know that angels come,
And round my heart entwine a chain, which links
Me to that world, where my Redeemer reigns.

And *thus* my life will pass—a few more years,
At most, and I, by my Redeemer saved,
Shall be where thou art; never more, to hear
The farewell word. And yet, *to-night*, my heart,
In loneliness unspoken, cries out for thee:
And I reach out, in anguish undefined,
To clasp *thee* to my heart.

CHILDHOOD DAYS, YE ARE MINE ONCE MORE.

THE fleeting moments have stayed in their flight;
Through the scenes of childhood I roam to-night!
Not alone, am I, my sisters are there,
With their curls of gold, and of auburn hair.

And we roam, again, in the forest old,
Through the tangled brush, o'er the mossy mold;
And we gather flowers, by the streamlet's side,
In the dewy hush of the morning tide.

Again, we watch, 'neath the old sycamore,
For the squirrels, hiding their winter store,
And we search through the brush, but a squirrel's nest
Never greets our eyes, in our earnest quest.

We linger awhile in the forest dell;
For we hear from far the sound of a bell:
"'Tis the beautiful deer, with his eyes of glee!
We'll meet him half-way, 'neath the old oak-tree!"

A race for the goal—and the dew-drops fall
'Neath our flying feet, through the forest-hall;
And the graceful deer, with step light and free,
Plays, again, with us, 'neath the old oak-tree.

And the fairy cups of the acorns that fall,
We gather, to grace our play-room and hall;
For the old rail fence, with its matted vine,
Is a play-room, dearer than walnut or pine.

And we search, again, for the sparrow's nest,
While the radiant sun dips down in the west;
We hear a low chirp; but the sparrow's brood
Is safely hidden, where none may intrude.

And, through the garden and meadow we stray,
As the sunlight fades into sombre gray;
And we chase the fire-fly by its spark;
As the twilight deepens and night grows dark.

And we linger, again, round the old hearth-stone;—
For the long, summer day, at last, has flown;—
And our voices commingle together *there*,
As we gather around the altar of prayer.

Childhood-days, ye are mine once more!
Mine—with your treasures of golden ore;

Mine—to be held with iron clasp
Lest ye slip from my loving grasp;
Mine to-night—though the rolling years
Have marked the way with many tears;
Mine—and I would not let you go,
Could I bind you to the world below.

LATE AUTUMN.

O FALLEN leaves, you murmur a music of your own;
You sigh o'er faded beauty: you weep o'er pleasures flown;
You echo, oh, so sadly, the thoughts within my heart;
You check my hours of pleasure; you bid the tear-drops start.

List! list! I hear a singing among you, fallen leaves,
Are fairy elves aweeping for summer's moonlit eves?
Hark! hark! a mystic wailing, like wail of broken heart,
O mosses, are you wailing, desiring to depart?

You must not murmur, mosses, it is your lot to stay,
And keep the brown earth warmer throughout the winter day;
And, when along the brushwood you hear the woodman's feet,
You may be sure he'll linger, your tender cups to greet.

The frost-king killed the daisies—no daisy can I find—
And roses, too, he withered, and left no trace behind;
He kissed you, too, O mosses, but left your beauty here,
So, you'll remain a blessing while all around is sear.

THE LAST STEP OF THE YEAR.

METHOUGHT, I heard a knocking at my door,
The echo of a step upon the floor;
And I arose,—nor thought me, then, of fear,
Although I knew the midnight hour was near,—
Threw back the bolt, and turned the creaking key;
But lo, no friendly guest awaited me:
Not even a *shadow* fell athwart the floor:
I quickly closed, and locked, and barred the door.

Again, that knock, once—twice—I listened long,
Took counsel with my fears, bade heart be strong;
Then, rose again, the waiting guest to see
Or solve, at least, the strange, weird mystery:
When o'er my frightened senses swept the thought,
It is no mortal friend that waits without—
The knock, I hear, is heard but in my heart—
The *New Year* waits to bid the Old depart.

Just inside my door, stands the *dear Old Year*,—
While memory echoes every falling tear;

Lingering, though his steps have weary grown,
And moments write, "*His work is nearly done!*"
Waiting for the moment, when the severed thread
Tells for aye, "*This instant hath the Old Year fled!*"
Midst the ringing bells, midst the joyous cheer,
Midst it all—I hear—the last step of the year.

WEARY OF WAITING.

SHE sat alone in the twilight,
  Weary of toil and care;
Weary of scorn and derision;
  Weary of all things fair;
Weary of waiting and hoping
  For brighter days to come;
Knowing that earth's cold bosom
  Yielded her not a home.

She sat alone in the twilight,—
  And watched the shadows creep,–
With a heart of bitter anguish
  And eyes too sad to weep:
Her life had been wrecked, so sadly,
  A *word* might set her free:
But another life would be wrecked
  In the strange, dark mystery.

'Twas better to die unnoticed,
  Scorned as a common thief;

Than to say the word, that would bring
  Another heart to grief:
She sat and looked at the future—
  'Twas dark and undefined;
No radiant light illumined
  Her dark, bewildered mind.

She stood alone—no one was near—
  The rocks were gray and steep,
And dark and cold the shadows lay,
  And kissed the waters deep:
The billows rolled onward swiftly;
  Only a ripple was made:
Then waters, darkly rolled between
  The living and the dead.

In the early morn they found her
  Where willows kissed the wave:
For the dark and icy water
  Made her a lowly grave:
Strange! so strange and mysterious!
  At the dawning of the day,
Neglected, shunned, and derided,
  That soul had passed away.

Gone! gone with her load of sorrow;
  Gone with her load of care;
Gone! gone with her heavy burden,
  That none on earth could bear:

Gone—and no loving one near her
  To point to heaven above,
To Christ, the loving Redeemer,
  Who loved her with tender love.

Gone—*so sadly*, and *so strangely!*
  Reason reeled on its throne,
Ere the soul of that human being
  Passed to the great unknown:
Hushed was the joyous laughter;
  Hushed was the voice of song;
Hushed was the scorn and derision;
  Silent, the mighty throng.

For on that brow had been written
  A tale of fearful wrong;
Sorrow and anguish unspoken
  And silently borne so long:
Too late, alas! for the stricken,
  The truth is sadly told:
That one, to the tempter yielding,
  Had bought that lie with gold.

God judgeth all! and why it is,
  Is not for us to say:
But better bear the cold world's scorn,
  Than cast our life away:
God judgeth all! and we shall know,
  And know as we are known,
Upon that day, when we shall stand
  Before the eternal Throne.

MEMORY'S VAULT.

IN memory's vault, there are caskets stored,
  Filled with the treasures of childhood's bright life;
Of youth's sunny hours, ere the depths were stirred
  By the blasting winds of turmoil and strife.

There, the brightest dreams of our early days,
  Of what we intended our life to be,
Were buried away from our longing gaze;
  And we turned us, again, to futurity.

They were silently buried—naught was left
  But ashes—dead ashes—to mark their tread:
They passed away, and the heart was bereft
  Of its brightest hopes, when those day-dreams fled.

There, friendship's reft ties of the long ago
  Lie side by side, in a mournful array;
But the yearning heart-aches will, ever, below,
  Steal deftly along Time's shadowy way.

There, they were buried—no bells were heard—
  But a monitor stands, at the portal low,
To summon the host that noiselessly tread,
  Up the mystical way from the long ago.

They drop o'er each casket a silent tear;
  The record inscribe on the pure, white plate;
And keep watch and ward, as year after year,
  Other gems pass in, through the open gate.

Unseen and unfathomed by mortal eye,
  With its pearl-in-laid caskets unnumbered;
Unnumbered by man, but by God on high,
  Every casket will be remembered.

God guards every gem from the blighting storm;
  And sacred to Him, are those caskets fair:
He will guard them *all*, till the judgment morn,
  When earth will yield up, all her treasures rare.

Though those broken ties will be found no more,
  Nor the blighted hopes of the days agone:
Their counterpart lives on the other shore,
  In the mystical depths of God's white throne.

MARGARET MERTON.

IN the heart of a grove of elm trees
  Stood a mansion, built in olden time;
And, here and there, through its stately rooms;
  Were scattered treasures from every clime.

From father to son the mansion came,
  An heirloom, rich with its gathered store:
To this, Mr. Merton had brought his bride
  From her childhood home, on a foreign shore.

As the years rolled on, the children came,
  And gathered around the old arm chair:
There was William and Margaret, and
  Baby Lois with her golden hair.

And Arthur Gray, with his deep-toned voice,
  Would often come in the evening hour;
For Margaret's eyes had a charm for him;
  And he felt, and owned their gentle power.

"To-morrow morning, our good ship sails !
  For three long years we will sail the sea;
And, when again into port we ride,
  No longer a baby will Lois be."

William's laughing words hid deeper thoughts,—
  And a tear was trembling in his eye,—
As he kissed his sister's rosy cheek,
  And turned away with a lingering sigh.

Arthur looked down into Margaret's face,
  And read in her eyes, his answer there;
"I go not alone o'er the deep blue sea;
  Thy heart will go with me, everywhere."

In the early morn, the good ship sailed
  Out from the harbor, with ebbing tide:
And a treasured freight, and precious souls
  She bore away on the ocean wide.

Margaret turned to her home again:
  Father, mother and Lois were there;
But she missed her brother's laughing voice,
  His ringing step on the marble stair.

She missed the tones of another voice,
  Singing at eve with her brother Will;
But, here and there, through parlor and hall,
  The song was borne with a mystic trill.

Out of her babyhood Lois passed;
  As hours and days grew into a year;
And Margaret thought, with an aching heart,
  Of brother Will, and the unshed tear.

"Margaret, my daughter!" "Yes, father, I'm here!"
  "Can this be the twentieth day of June?"
"Yes, this is the night of the twentieth day;
  But, father, the morning will come very soon."

"Ah yes, my daughter, the morning cometh!
  But the unseen reaper stands at the door—
The summons hath come—my life-work is done—
  I'll awake in the morn, on the other shore.

"Only a year ago, the good ship sailed
  Away over the ocean, far and wide;—
And little thought I, I should go, so soon;
  But, daughter, I go with the ebbing tide.

"And, daughter, thy mother is sleeping now;
  But she'll join me soon, on the other shore:
Weep not, my child; for a merciful Hand
  Is ever around; look up and adore.

"So, daughter, thou soon wilt be left alone,
  Save Lois, no other will be with thee,
Till William and Arthur come back again;
  But God will ever thy Guardian be.

"And, daughter, sweet Lois will be thy care,
  To nurture and train in word, and in deed;
Thy heart may grow weary, but God is strong,
  He hath promised help, in the day of need.

"Tell William and Arthur—my noble sons—
  To be true to themselves, and true to God:
I've done by one, as I've done by the other:
  They are sons alike in the sight of God.

"I've left the homestead to Lois and thee:
  Uncle Daly Thorne will tend to my *will*:
It is in the safe in the old south room,
  The key to the box has the dark blue seal."

The mansion was draped in the badge of woe:
  Muffled steps were heard in the darkened room:
Father and mother were sleeping at last;
  Sleeping the sleep of the desolate tomb.

Margaret turned to her home again,
  None but Lois was left to her there;
She heard the sound of her father's voice,
  "Daughter, sweet Lois will be thy care."

And she heard the voice of Uncle Thorne,
  As one in a dream might hear: "The *will?*"
"Oh, yes, in the safe in the old south room,
  The key to the box has the dark blue seal."

And Margaret sat in the old arm chair,
  Knowing full well, what the *will* would say:
Uncle Thorne read, "I give and bequeath
  To Margaret, the cottage over the way.

"To both my daughters, a thousand a year:
  To Arthur, my house in Mont Clare:
To William I give the Elmwood farm:
  To little Lois the, old arm chair.

"The homestead I give to brother Thorne
  With all it holds, save that old arm chair:
To sister Mary, the quaint old coach
  With the noble greys, and harness rare.

"The rest of the things, that I 've set aside,
  And, which I 've named apart in my *will*,
Are for many friends, not of my kin,
  You 'll find each package marked with my seal."

Margaret awaited the closing words;
Then said, "Uncle Thorne, my father's *will*
Is in the safe in the old south room,
  The key to the box has the dark blue seal.

"The *will*, *you* read, is not father's *will*:
  He left the homestead to Lois and me;
He told me so, the night that he died:
  Please be so kind as to give me the key."

"But, Margaret, I *have* your father's *will*:
  You misunderstood your father, my child:
But here is the key with the dark blue seal—
  Grief, Margaret Merton, has made you wild."

Margaret passed, with a tearless eye,
  To where, asleep, little Lois lay;
And, clasping her to her aching heart,
  She turned to the cottage over the way.

* * * * * * *

The ivy clung to the cottage wall,
  And tenderly hid each old gray stone;
And darkly shaded the lowly room,
  Where Margaret Merton sat alone.

The sun shone in through the clinging vines,
  And played o'er the maiden sewing there;
Ever in and out her needle flew,
  Sewing and shaping a garment fair.

The roses bloomed by the window ledge;
  And their dewy fragrance filled the air,
As rosy petals were wafted down,
  On her little sister's golden hair.

On his daily round, the postman paused,
  "A letter, Margaret, a letter for thee!
May it bring good news, and naught of ill,
  From the sailor lads away at sea."

Lois sprang up, from the rosy drift
  Of fragrant petals, that round her lay;
Her blue eyes twinkling with sweet delight,—
  "From brother Will? or from Arthur Gray?"

The color deepened on Margaret's cheek;
  The postman smiled, as he turned away;
And Lois flew to her sister's side,
  To hear what the letter had to say.

The sun-rays brightened the lowly room;
  And the shadows flitted far away;
As Margaret read with trembling voice,
  "We shall sail for home, this very day!"

Patiently, Lois bided her time,
  Till Margaret had read the letter through;
Then a gladsome shout, "They're coming home!"
  And Lois out through the doorway flew.

"They are coming home, they're coming home!"
  The echo rang, on the morning air;
As Lois gathered her treasures up,
  And wove a wreath for the old arm chair.

"I'll gather roses and daisies bright;
  And deck with garlands my little room;
And birds and butterflies I'll invite,
  To share in the joy of their coming home.

"I'll gather the blue-bell's cup of dew;
  And the buttercup's saucer of gold;
And our plates shall be the myrtle blue;
  And our table, the moss-covered mold."

So sang the child in joyous delight,
  For her playmates were the birds and flowers;
But Margaret sat in the lowly room,
  And thought with joy of the future hours.

The letter dropped from her open hand,
  And swift on the sun-lit floor it lay:
For the little cottage with ceiling low
  Had, with the shadows, flitted away.

Instead of the cottage and ivy-vines,
  A quaint old mansion with oak-carved halls;
Where the sunlight streamed through finest lace,
  On grand old paintings and frescoed walls:

And tones of music and joyous mirth
  Are floating forth on the morning air;
William, and Lois, and Arthur Gray,
  And father, and mother *all* are there.

And, again, she hears her brother's voice,
  "No longer a baby will Lois be:"
And the whispered words of Arthur Gray,
  "I go not alone o'er the deep blue sea."

"Lady-bird, Lady-bird, hither come!"
  Sang Lois under the locust tree:
Margaret smiled, for the song mingled in
  "I go not alone o'er the deep blue sea."

And Margaret built a home of love
  On sunbeams, floating around her there:
And she finished the words of Arthur Gray,
  "Thy heart will go with me everywhere."

Then, here and there, through the cottage rooms,
  Margaret moved with womanly grace:
And a home of beauty the cottage grew,
  As the tale of love was told in her face.

"They say, Margaret Merton, 'the ship has sailed,'"—
  Quoth the neighbor from over the way,—
"'That this very eve she'll be in port:'
  May no *ill* betide the day!"

"Why do you think of ill, Neighbor Moore?
  Never a morning more bright and clear;
Not even a cloud in the ether blue;
  Then, wherefore, Neighbor, your thoughts of fear?"

"Aye, aye, Margaret Merton, that is true;
  Ne'er a brighter morn on ocean wave:
But shadows lurk in the deep blue sky,
  And tell the tale of an ocean grave."

"You frighten me, Neighbor, your voice is weird,
  And your words are prophetic of ill:
A shadow has crept o'er earth and sky,
  And my heart it has chilled with its chill."

"Nay, Margaret Merton, 't would not be I,
  To check thy joy with a thought of ill:
But a storm is gathering in its power—
  Hark! hearest not its muttering peal?"

And in through the doorway Lois sprang—
  Roses and blue-bells scattering far—
Her lips were blanched with a nameless fear;
  And the song had died on the morning air.

And through the rest of that fearful day,
  Margaret watched in the lowly room;
And Lois crept to her sister's side,
  Stricken with awe at the darkening gloom.

And still she watched, through the darkling night,
  Reading her fate in the lightning's flash;
In the crying wind and moaning sea;
  In the breaker's roar, and thunder's crash.

The morning dawned, as the storm died away;
  And Margaret saw the neighbors go by;
Her eyes looked the question, she dared not ask;
  The truth she read in the downcast eye.

The postman paused at the cottage door:
  "A letter, Margaret, a letter for thee!"
He turned away with an aching heart;
  He bore sad news from over the sea.

With a pallid face, she broke the seal,
  Knowing it came from the light-house tower,
And would tell the tale of fearful wrecks,
  That were strewing ocean's sandy floor.

"Margaret, my friend," wrote Lucy Brown,
  "I thought of thee, through the day and night,
When darkening clouds swept the angry sky
  And wave lashed wave, in its roaring might.

"I thought of thee, and I could not rest;
  And I deemed, it were best, thee should know;
For the saddest things are easiest borne,
  If we stand face to face with our woe.

"The ship which sailed with thy loved ones out,
  Was spoken at sea, three days ago:—
Yester-eve she was to come in port—
  But all this, of course, thou dost know.

"We watched her beating against the tide,
  As thunder answered to thunder's peal;—
And we saw her quake, from stem to stern,
  As she rode against the raging gale.

"Hour after hour, through our noble glass,
We saw her riding the angry sea;
Nearer she came, then she drifted round
To where the treacherous breakers lay.

"Quickly and swiftly, her prow was turned,
And she swept away before the blast:
And father said, as he watched her course—
'No danger now, she is saved at last.'

"'Fire! fire!' we heard the watchman shout:
A lurid light lit the ocean's foam;
And in dumb despair, and dark dismay,
We saw her go down to a watery tomb.

"Margaret, my friend, it is hard to write!
But I know, that it is best for thee;
They are gone, all gone! Not one is saved
From the ship that sailed over the sea.

"I thought of thee, and I could not rest;
And I deemed it were best, thee should know;
For the saddest things are easiest borne,
If we stand face to face with our woe.

Through her round of duties, Margaret went
With the moaning cry, "Alone! Alone!"
She heard the bell from the light-house tower;
But it wailing wept, "Alone! Alone!"

And, in and out, wherever she went
  Were heard the tones of a wailing lyre:
"They are gone, all gone! Not one is saved,"
  Wailed from the chords of that broken lyre.

The robin sang in the locust tree,
  Knowing naught of sadness or sorrow;
Unheedful of what the day might be;
  Or of what would be on the morrow.

And Lois crept out, among her flowers;
  Feeling a sadness, she knew not what:
But listening awhile to the robin's song—
  Sorrow and sadness were all forgot.

The song, rudely broken, was gathered up;
  And Lois sang, 'neath the locust tree,
"Lady-bird, lady-bird, hither come,
  They are coming home from over the sea!"

And Margaret heard, as one in a dream,
  The song floating in, around her there;
And again she heard her father's voice,
  Sounding, so clear, on the evening air:

"And, daughter, sweet Lois will be thy care,
  To nurture and train in word, and in deed;
Thy heart may grow weary, but God is strong,
  He hath promised help, in the day of need."

And Margaret heard another voice,
  Sounding, so sweetly, around her there;
"You're not alone, Sister, for I am here!"
  And Lois stood by the old arm chair.

She clasped the little one to her heart,
  And the words she repeated o'er and o'er;
"You're not alone, Sister, for I am here!"
  But the words a double meaning bore.

And Margaret turned from the life, so rent
  By the wreck that strewed the ocean sand;
And gathered the ends of the broken thread,
  And wove them in with another strand.

And, in and out, through the daily round
  Of life's new duties, Margaret went;
Doing the work, she was left to do,
  Till Lois' life into hers was blent.

And, here and there, through the country wide,
  Margaret was welcomed from door to door;
And her cheerful heart a blessing left,
  In the homes of the suffering poor.

And Lois grew in maidenly grace,
  Sharing, in Margaret's household cares:
The cottagers praised her womanly ways,
  But they named Margaret's name in their prayers.

And they said of her, "her life is filled
  With deeds of love unto others done;
But the crowning work of all her life
  Is molding the life of the little one."

But they saw not the waves of trouble,
  That Margaret had waded through;
Nor the life rent in twain with sorrow,
  When she stood face to face with her woe.

They only saw, the life that had grown
  Out of the ends of the broken thread:
And never knew, that *that* life of love
  Flowed from a heart whose life-joys had fled.

As the rose lends its sweetest perfume,
  When its petals are ruthlessly torn;
So the sweetest life is the life that flows
  From a bleeding heart in sorrow's urn.

THE PRECIOUS LINKS OF TIME.

HOURS are precious links in Time's great chain!
They pave the pathway, o'er life's tossing main,
On which, unshod, thought wanders free,
And gathers up, from life's deep, troubled sea,
The untold tale of years; of joy and care,
Of hope and sorrow, which had clustered there;—
And weaves them o'er, with many a tear-dimmed thread.

They bind the fleet-winged moments—Time's sand-drops—
Into golden sets of sixty laden cups,
Each, star-gemmed by sixty precious seconds:
Interlaced with pearls and glittering diamonds,
And all the choicest gems of earth and heaven,
Which ever could to mortals have been given,
They measure off the march of day and night.

There are many hours, which seem double-winged,
Strong, mighty hours, from Time's great ocean wringed,
That sweep along our path with fearful power;
Till the strong will is bowed in trial's hour,
The boasted strength of manhood's pride laid low
Before the fearful power, the bitter blow,—
  Which teaches him to lean on God alone.

Still, there are many other *golden* hours,
Which strew our path with bursting buds and flowers;
And shower blessings, as they sweep along
To mingle with eternity's great throng;
Giving to us, their matchless power and grace
Ere they speed hence to bless another place;
  And wrap their loving mantle round its brow.

But *others* come with soft and silent tread,
And, then, pass on across the flowery mead;
Pass, full-freighted with high-born trust, and faith
In Him, who marked for us the rugged path;
And thus, full-fraught with weal and heavenly love,
They circle, now and then, through waves above,
  Until they rest before the Eternal Throne.

ALL THINGS MUST CHANGE.

"Don't change much till I see you."—MYRTLE.

WHY should I not change, when the scenes of life
  Are checkered all over with light and shade?
Each in-coming moment with change is rife:
  And each out-going hour writes, "*All must fade.*"

Passing hence in a day is stamped on all,
  In the humble cottage, and palace home;
'Tis read in the eye, and funeral pall;
  'Tis garnered up *There,* in heaven's bright dome.

Yes, all things will change, and so, also, shall I!
  For morn has its shadows, as well as night;
And the wheels of Time are rolling us nigh
  To the close of life, in their onward flight.

Yes, all things will change! Time's finger will trace
  On the brow of all, the furrows of care:
From the cheek of youth, the bloom he'll erase;
  And mark his path with the silvery hair.

Yes, all things *must change!* then, Why should not I?
  Our pathway is traced by the dying leaf;
And the years, full-fraught with a passing sigh,
  Are gathering and binding sheaf after sheaf.

They're reaping and binding the wheat and the tare,
  And garnering them up, for now and for aye;
For weal, or for woe, they're binding them here,
  To be met by us, on the judgment day.

ONLY GOLDEN CURLS.

A TINY casket; a baby boy;
Hands sweetly clasped, as if with joy;
Blue eyes closed from the light of day;
Wee feet straying the heavenly way;
Snowdrops blooming the curls among;
Sweet voice singing the angel-song;
All that's left, in our home below,
Are golden curls from a brow of snow.

* * * * * * *

Years roll on, and again, I stand;
Bright golden curls are in my hand;
Another form is laid to rest,
Sweet hands folded over her breast;
Loving voice sings on earth no more,
Singing now, on the other shore;
Only golden curls, left in my hand!
Our darling has joined the angel-band.

THE EMIGRANTS.

"I SOLD the farm to-day, my wife,
  For a good round sum in gold;
Three thousand five hundred and ten:
  A very large sum, I'm told:
And now hurra for the west, my wife,
  With its garnered hoards of wealth!
Its miles on miles of acres broad,
  And climate so full of health!

"Your brother John has sold his farm,
  And received the money down;
He'll go with us as we go west,
  If he sells his house in town:
'Tis said, that Fred and Edward Glen
  Have offered their farms for sale,
And Sumner Green, and Foster too,
  And Elbert, and Ellick Hale.

"They're noble men and faithful friends,
  And their wives are true and tried;
I well remember Nellie Glen
  On the day our baby died;

She seemed to know just what to do,
  And so kindly thought for you—
I 'm glad they're going, one and all,
  'Twould be hard to say adieu.

"They're friends of yours, and friends of mine,
  And never a word nor thought,
Through the lapsing years has caused a tear
  Our friendship to mar or blot:
They've ne'er forgot we're children all
  Of our Heavenly Father's fold;
That kindly deeds and loving words
  Are better than mines of gold.

"'Tis said by one, 'that Love lives not
  On our shadowy, fleeting earth,
'Tis selfishness, that perishes
  With the thought that gave it birth!'
We know, dear wife, there is a love,
  Which is based on trusting faith,
That lasts through life, and brighter grows,
  When shadows o'er-cast the path.

"What! tears, my wife! Are you so sad
  At signing the farm away?
I did not think that tears would fall,
  When I made the trade to-day:
A stroke of the pen—the deed was done—
  I had never counted the cost;
But now, Alas! I see it all,
  Our beautiful home is lost!"

The wagon stood at the farmhouse door,
  With its stretch of canvas white;
And in and out the children climbed,
  With a strange and wild delight;
They knew not then, that they would mourn,
  When the binding home ties broke;
That half of the charm of life would go,
  When the farewell words were spoke.

They could not see the troublous scenes,
  Which lay in the wake of years;
Nor know, that eyes would heavy grow
  With their unshed weight of tears;
That hearts would ache 'neath burdens borne,
  Ere the year had scarcely flown,
And turn, in very weariness
  And longing, to lay them down.

'Tis well indeed, that we know not,
  What the future has in store,
But ever think, the morrow will be,
  As the days that went before;
For if we knew, we'd often shrink,
  And our strength would be as naught;
We'd fail to see the loving Hand,
  That has planned our future lot.

But not alone were they to go,
  Their neighbors were going, too;
A dozen or more, "'Tis best," they said;
  "For strength by numbers will grow;

The way is lone—the road is wild—
  The prairies are broad and wide,
So strength with love will we unite,
  And travel on, side by side."

And, far and near, throughout the glen,
  The white-covered wagons stood,
And girls and boys with messages
  Were hurrying through the wood,
"To-morrow morn at early dawn,
  We'll meet at the old oak tree."
The words were borne from door to door,
  Far over the grassy lea.

And here and there, the farmers' wives
  Were hurrying to and fro;
Their tears were stayed, 'twas best, they thought
  Their children were growing so;
Their farms were small, they'd need more land,
  As the boys to manhood grew—
A better time might never come,
  But 'twas hard to say adieu.

And sleepless eyes, and aching hearts,
  Through the night, sad vigils kept;
But the little ones, too young to know,
  In sweet oblivion slept;
And cheeks grew pale, and eyes grew moist,
  As the farewell hour drew near:
The farewells, said, might be for aye,
  At least for many a year.

One homeward look, they'd turned the hill,
  All their homes were hid from sight:
Would ever more, through rolling years,
  That picture their eyes delight?
The country was wild, and rough, and strange,
  As westward their steps would bend;
And days, and weeks, and months must pass,
  Ere they'd reach their journey's end.

So slow, but sure, the long train crept
  Afar o'er the western plain;
The white had turned to dull, dark gray
  With the dust and beating rain;
And hearts and hands had weary grown,
  And the way lay long before;
And bare and brown, the mountains loomed
  Afar toward the western shore.

And prairie wild, and woodland belts,
  And acres of teeming wealth
They slowly passed; a thought had grown
  In their minds as if by stealth;
From whence it came, not one could tell,
  But for weal or woe 'twas thought;
The goal must be the land of gold,
  Where the hills were gold inwrought.

And like white sails on the ocean
  O'er-riding the surging wave,
While sailors toil with beating hearts,
  Half-fearing a watery grave,

So, travel-worn the weary train
  Was toiling o'er dunes of sand:
And trusting hearts were hoping yet,
  They would save their half-starved band.

They yearned with such weary yearning
  For the old home place again;
Those little farms in the valley
  Had hidden that sweeping plain;
They lived no more in the present,
  The present for them was gone;
Their treasures lay in the past life,
  Whither their fancies had flown.

And weeks wore on, and months rolled by,
  Around them the desert lay,
A barren waste of drifting sand,
  Scorched white by the sun's hot ray;
A trackless plain untrod by man,
  Save the searchers for hidden ore,
But often trod by Death's grim feet
  In the morn and evening hour.

And, now and then, they felt his touch,
  As he culled a drooping flower;
A moment's pause, then, "Forward, move!"
  And the white sand drifted o'er;
No tears were shed, they'd ceased to fall,
  The fountains of tears were dry;
But life-drops welled from bleeding hearts,
  In a heavy yearning sigh.

'Twas naught to them, that golden drifts
  Were threading the rocky pass;
That jewels lay along their way,
  In a glittering, shining mass;
That the goal was reached, their journey o'er;
  For sorrow had bowed each head;
And joy had fled in one dull throb,
  When they numbered out their dead.

If the gold they'd sought were the tear-drops,
  Wept down by the burning sun
And hoarded in mountain garners;
  The treasure they'd dearly won;
For half of their loving number
  Had been left 'neath the dunes of sand;
They were the jewels of priceless worth
  From the Heavenly Father's hand.

I SIGH FOR THE WOODS.

I SIGH for the woods, these long, long days,
  Where the lengthening shadows lie;
Where sunlight streams through a leafy maze
  Which hideth the deep, blue sky.

I sigh for that greenwood, where we strayed
  Those, far away, summer days;
Where we gathered flowers throughout the glade,
  And echoed the bird's sweet lays.

I shut out the sights and sounds of town,
  And gaze on the maple tree,
And fancy, I hear the wood-dove's moan
  Sweeping through forests to me.

But years have passed, and never again
  Shall I roam that forest-wild:—
Of the happy group, I, alone, remain,
  And, no more, a merry child.

WHENCE CAME THAT POWER?

WHENCE came, my dear friend, that mystical power,
Which bound thee, captive in youth's sunny hour;
And stamped on thy brow, in the morn of life,
That, which speaks thy soul, with the world at strife?

It hath tuned thy heart to a minor key;
As thy bark is tossed on time's rolling sea;
And sad are the tones, which the angels hear;
As thy bark sweeps on, through the changing year.

It hath filled with sadness, life's brimming cup,
Till sighs mark the way, as the past throngs up:
It hath rung sad changes on cheek and brow;
And bound the dark past to the present, *now*.

Oh, turn thee, dear friend, from that blighted past;
Break the power, that hath bound and held thee fast;
Nerve thy hands for toil; thy heart to endure;
There's a life beyond, a home to secure:

A heaven to win, or, a heaven to lose—
Then, turn thee, dear friend, Oh, turn *thee* and choose!
No time to be lost—for the Savior divine
Hath given thee only this moment for thine.

There's a boundless gulf, which lieth between
The shore, that we see, and the shore unseen;
And its waves are dark, and the way is lone,
But thy bark must cross to the Father's throne.

Then, seek thee, that Pilot, who'll safely guide
Thy trembling bark o'er the turbulent tide;
And anchor it safe at the foot of the throne,
When thy day is ended, thy life-work done.

THE SONG OF THE NOON-TIDE HOUR.

LOW, voiceless murmurs through the woodland sweep;
And soft, dreamy sounds through the lichens creep;
And spicy fragrance is floating abroad,
Where the fairy moss-cups sprinkle the sod.

The five-fingered ivy her festoon unfurls,
And with trumpet-creeper, lovingly curls
Round the gnarléd oak, growing gray and sere,
'Neath the blighting storms of many a year.

But the thrilling sound, the murmuring strain
Still rises and falls o'er the grassy plain;
And the honey-bee, afar from its cell,
Pauses awhile on a hyacinth's bell.

The blooming flowers, on the upland lea,
With the yellow-cowslip, beneath the beech-tree,
Now close their petals, and dreamily nod
To the dark-green mesh-work, covering the sod.

The field-daisy winks, and shuts her bright eye
Away from the sun in the burning sky;
And the star-grass whispers, "What does it mean,
This murmuring sound from the forest green?"

But the strain sweeps on, through the greenwood aisles;
And the myrtle looks up, and sweetly smiles,
From her shady nook in the wild-wood bower,
And echoes the song of the noon-tide hour.

A low, dreamy note has the noon-tide hour;
But it wields its scepter with gentle power;
The song, that it sings, has a tender trill;
And it steals o'er all with a soft, sweet thrill.

THE SPECTRE OF THE BROCKEN.

THOU art no wild, weird gnome;
  No spectre of the deep;
No roamer without home,
  Left by the tide to weep.

Thou hast no tears to shed;
  No voice with which to sing;
No listener hears thy tread,
  Making the welkin ring.

Thou leavest no foot-print,
  To trace thy lineage out;
Thy form is not like flint;
  But like *my own*, throughout.

Thou comest, thou art gone,
  Gone with the morning hour;
For only in the morning dawn,
  Thou showest forth thy power.

Fleet as the winds of earth,
  Or lightning in the sky,
Thou passest, and our hearth
  Gives back no answering cry.

THE ANGEL GUIDES.

THEY draw near the couch of a weary one,
Whose life-toils are over, and work all done;
She leaves her cares at the close of the day,
In the arms of Christ breathes her life away;
The casket remains, but the soul has flown
Away with the angels to God's white throne.

With a song, they come to a fair-haired boy,
That has grasped life's thread with a laugh of joy;
He hears the sweet trill of the seraph-song,
And passes away to join the bright throng;
They bear him far up, to the upper fold,
Where "harpers are harping on harps of gold."

With sunshine, they come to a baby girl,
And the bright rays float o'er each golden curl:
She folds them up, in her tiny child-hand,
And turns with a smile to the angel-band:
They bear the sweet bud to the Sinless One,
The precious Redeemer, God's only Son.

A mission, they bring to a child of Time,
Which bids him, prepare for the *better clime,*
For the world of light, the mansions of love,
Prepared by Christ for his children above:
He turns from the paths of sin, he had trod;
And anchors his faith to the sinner's God.

They lovingly come to an aged man,
Whose threescore and ten seems a tiny span,
A fleeting moment, by Jesus given,
In which to prepare the soul for heaven;
A fleeting moment, bridging Time's river—
Death cuts the bridge—he goes to the *Giver.*

To Aggie.

THE scenes of earth are very fair,
  Her flowers, bright and gay;
Ere death's dark wing hath hovered near,
  To brush them with decay.

And such, dear Aggie, is thine own,
  Made bright with joy and hope;
No parting sigh, no dying groan
  To drink the music up.

And I might wish, 'twould always be
  The same bright, joyous scene;
But death hath wrought such change for me,
  I know the wish were vain.

Then, let me point *thee*, far away,
  To that bright world above,
Where sorrowing tears are wiped away,
  By God's sweet hand of love.

And now, dear Aggie, fare-thee-well!
  Our paths in life are two;
Mine, leadeth through bereavement's vale,
  Thine, may *heaven* guard it true.

On Receiving a Bouquet.

With "Compliments of Mary."

A BOUQUET, culled from the cool, shady bowers,
Where the wild bee roams through the sunny hours,
Where the lady-bird shelters her golden head,
And the sweetest fragrance abroad is shed:
Out from the garden wall's shady recess,—
Quite humble in thought, and modest in dress,—
A bouquet of leaflets, buds, and flowers,
Kissed by the breeze, and the gentle showers.

A tulip's cup, where the yellow and red
Are woven in, with an amberine thread;
Too delicate, far, for pencil or brush;
Yet telling, that mildew will blight and crush
Earth's fairest promise of happiness here,
Which blooms to wither and die in a year.
A buttercup, writing, "*Ingratitude,*"
On its golden blossom, and emerald bud.

And the purple lilac—emblem of love—
Bringing sweet thoughts of the shady alcove;
Of cool, grassy walks, by branches o'er-hung,
Where in summer twilight the robin sung;
Of vine-wreathed cottage and flowing river;
Of moon-beams, decking the waves with silver;
Of childhood's bright days; of friendship's sweet ties,
Severed here, and linked beyond the blue skies.

A snow-white strawberry,—type of pureness,
And of the future, pledge of happiness,—
Peeping out, from amidst the leaflets green,
With a modest grace and a humble mien;
Telling of summer; of scarlet berries;
The upland lea, and the dancing fairies;
The singing birds, and the golden-gleamings,
Which are shaded in, with childhood-dreamings.

And violets blue,—where the sky-tints met,—
Whispering softly, "I shall never forget!'
Earth scenes may change, and, forgotten, may pass
The flower-bud and bell, and the waving grass;
And the child and maiden, forgotten too,
May pass from the earth, as passes the dew;
Though *I*, too, shall wither, and also die,
'*I shall never forget*,' will live on high."

OUR TREASURES ARE SAFE IN THE EVERMORE.

I STOOD on the beach when the tide went out,
  And thought me, with heart of sorrow,
That far, far away the white sails would float
  Ere they anchored on a morrow.

And memory reviewed all the days gone by,
  Forgetting, for once, the present:
I wandered again neath another sky,
  Lost in the joy of the moment.

The tide ebbed and flowed on the pebbly strand,
  And murmured a strange, sad measure:
Its waves swept away the glittering sand,
  Exulting, I held my treasure:

Nor dreamed, that the wave had the power to bear
  One gem from my hoarded treasure:
A casket slipped from my clasp unaware,
  The wave bore it off in rapture.

I stood in amazement upon the shore;
  The tide swept away unheeding,
And it bore my gem to return no more;
  But it waked me from my dreaming.

And though, with the tide of years have gone out
  My heart treasures, one—two—three—four—
I stand no longer amazed, or in doubt,
  They are safe in The Evermore.

I stand on the beach as the tide goes out,
  But not, with a heart of sorrow;
Though I watch the ships from the harbor float,
  I ever think of The Morrow.

I hear the low wail of the sighing sea;
  The wail is a wail of sorrow,
But it bears no wail of sadness to me;
  For I think me of The Morrow.

MY FRIEND.

FOR thee, dear friend, I crave,
From Christ, who came to save;
A blessing now,
And humbly bow
To Him, who rules the wave.

And still for thee, I pray,
In twilight dim and gray,
That God above,
Our God of love,
May be thy strength and stay.

In times of doubt and fear,
When falls the rising tear,
May'st thou receive
Strength to believe,
That God, thy help is near.

WRITTEN FOR AN ALBUM.

AWAY, little Album, thy task to fulfill,
Go, gather the gemlets from life's running rill;
Like the guardian genii, all evil eschew,
And gather for Mary, the loving and true.

Away to the palace, the cottage, the hall;
Where pure Friendship lingers, give each one a call;
And twine in the wreath, thou art weaving for her,
A trust, that fails never, though earth be no more.

Go, tell her, the bright rose of beauty may fade,
Life's sweetest enjoyments be suddenly stayed;
That nothing is lasting, that nothing is sure,
But that bright realm of glory, where blight is *no more.*

Go, tell from a heart that is nurtured in grief,
That our sweetest enjoyments are fleeting and brief;
And point to the throne of the Infinite Him,
In whose loving presence, all earth-joys grow dim.

And now, little Album, thy mission is won;
From our vine-clustered cottage, go forth to the sun;
And bear to sweet Mary, my wishes of weal,
Farewell, little Album, a lasting farewell.

LILLIAN.

AS the chime of bells, in the old church tower,
Rang out a knell, for the midnight hour,
A wail stole forth on the trembling air,
And lingering a moment floated there,
Then died away in a low, sad strain,
Like the dying notes of a sweet refrain,
Breathed from the strings of a broken lyre
Wailing, so sadly, ere they expire.

The city slept! not a song of mirth
Swept o'er the face of the throbbing earth:
Save the watchman's tread, in his ceaseless round,
Naught broke the silence that reigned around:
But listening angels were hovering nigh
Midst the lamps of God in the deep, blue sky:
They caught the wail, in its upward flight,
And bent their wings through the halls of night.

They swept o'er streets, deserted and still,
Over bright homes of wealth, and of skill,
Nor lingered they, where the portals shone
With golden crests from another zone;
But o'er them all, in their loving flight;
On, ever on, through the darkening night,
Till down midst the haunts where poverty wept,
The spirit wings of the angels swept.

For there laid one in a lowly room,
Ripening, so fast, for the yawning tomb;
The sands of life were ebbing away—
Night going out in eternal day—
Her pale lips moved, but only a moan
Was borne to the ear of the pleading one:
"Mamma, awake! Why don't Papa come?
So dark is night, and so full of gloom!"

And lost in grief was the little one;
Over her heart had the death-wave blown;
It stilled the tide in the leaping vein,
And ice-like swept, o'er her throbbing brain:
She knew not why, but the moan was stayed;
Musical strains around her were played:
"Listen! Mamma"— then the angels in love
Culled the sweet bud for the courts above.

They stayed their flight but a moment there:
A rustle of wings on the morning air—
And floating down on the ether clear
Was borne the sound of a falling tear—
A tear of joy from the angel train,
Mingling in with a rapturous strain:
"We culled the bud with the withering flower
To bloom *up here* in the heavenly bower."

The morning dawned! From that lowly room
The caskets were borne to the open tomb:
But the souls, released from their house of clay,
Had sought the world of eternal day,
And clothed anew, by redeeming grace,
They stood in the light of their Father's face;
And learned to know the Infinite Love,
That bore their souls to the world above.

God's Calling and Ordaining of a Prophet.

IN days of old, when God with man did talk,
A voice was heard, and from the heavenly hights
It wandered down to earth, through realms of space;
And one, there was, who heard and knew the voice:
It was the voice of the Almighty God:
And well he knew, it spoke to him alone;
And he, amazed and yet with wondrous joy,
Stood still to hear, and listening there he heard—
"I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee
A prophet unto the nations of the earth."

The voice wrote on his heart,
A prophet thou art,
A prophet ordained by the strength of the Lord,
Go forth in his might proclaiming his word.

Long since he'd learned to know and love that voice;
It was the voice of his Omniscient God:
So, when it wrote upon his heart those words;
He spake, and to the listening ear of Him
Who heareth every prayer the answer went:
"Behold, I cannot speak: I am a child."

And still he stood, and listened to that voice,
"Say not, 'I *am* a child:' for thou shalt go
To all, and whatsoever I command thee,
Thou shalt speak, and be not afraid, for *I*
Am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord."

And God wrote on his heart,
A prophet thou art,
A prophet ordained by the strength of the Lord,
Go forth in his might proclaiming his word.

Then waited he, until the Lord put forth
His hand and touched his mouth, and said to him,
"Behold, into thy mouth, I have put my words,
Over nations have I this day set thee:
Therefore gird up thy loins, arise, and speak."

And he arose; for God on him had placed
His hand, and consecrated him, henceforth,
To do the work he'd chosen him to do.
No more he walked midst men as one of them,
The hand of God was on him evermore.
And so he girded him for arduous toil,
Nor paused he, day nor night, but at his post,
Through suffering oft, he was forever found,
Until the work was done: and then—God called—
A crown awaited him in courts above.

"ONLY TO PART! AND IS THAT ALL?"

ONLY to part! And is that all?
Heed we not a higher call,
Speaking of a better day,
Of our Savior as the way;
Bidding *us* prepare to go,
From this world of sin and woe,
To *that world* of perfect rest,
Where the freed from sin are blest?

Only to part! And is that all?
A brief life, and funeral pall?
Is there no bright Hereafter,
When on heaven's register,
We shall find the names of all,
Who've obeyed the Savior's call?—
Part we now, to meet no more
On the bright, eternal shore?

Only to part? *That is not all!*
For we hear our Savior's call,
Bidding us, prepare to meet
Round our Father's mercy-seat.

"I AM WAITING IN THE TWILIGHT."

I AM waiting in the twilight;
  In the twilight, cold and gray;
Waiting, longing, while the dark night
  Casts its shadow o'er life's way.

Casts its shadow, till the life-path
  Is obscured from mortal sight;
And *I* am left to walk by *faith*:
  Till the dawn of morning light.

But the mind's eye seems the clearer,
  When the shadows fall around;
And the night-hours bring me nearer
  To the crossing of Life's bound,

And though shadows darkly hover,
  Round my life-path, all the way;
Yet, I'll turn me to my Savior,
  He will be my shield—my stay.

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Yes, I'm waiting, in the twilight,
  For the coming of the day;
When the shadow of the dark night
  Shall have flitted from my way.

Then the dawn of glorious day
  Will reveal a Savior's love,
Lighting up the heavenly way,
  As he leads me up above.

SING SOFTLY, SISTER, SOFTLY SING!

SING softly, sister, softly sing!
For on the night-air, now are stealing
Soft, low strains of angel-trilling:
Angels hover near me, sister,
And I hear them sweetly whisper—
Of a bright *land*, far away,
Where there reigns an endless day.
Yes, they gather round me now!
And they chant, in murmurs low,
Of that *land*, where falls no tear;
Of a long, unending year.
Yes, they're chanting,
They are trilling,
Of that glorious heavenly plain;
Where, beside the crystal fountain,
Harps of gold are tuned for me.

Sing softly, sister, softly sing!
In the room, weird phantoms hover;
And the night is growing darker;
Icy waves are sweeping o'er me;
And, no longer can I see thee;

But I hear the angels sing,
And they make the welkin ring.
Yes, they gather round me now,
And they chant, in murmurs low,
Of a world beyond the sky,
Where they never weep nor sigh.
Yes, they're chanting,
They are trilling
Of that glorious One who reigns
On the pure Elysian plains;
And the crown he holds for me.

Sing softly, sister, softly sing!
For by my side the Reaper stands;
And on my heart he lays his hands;
And bids the life-tide cease to flow,
That binds me to the world below:
Still, I hear the angels sing,
While they float on golden wing;
Gathering near me, closer now,
And they chant in murmurs low,
"Sister spirit, come away,
To the realms of endless day:"
Yes, they're chanting,
They are trilling
Of a glorious world of light,
Where the eternal God of Might
Hath prepared a place for me.

Sing softly, sister, softly sing!
Angel guides are beckoning to me;
But the river floweth darkly;
And I fear to pass it over,
Unless angels round me hover—
Yes, my feet have touched the brink;
But I, now, no longer shrink,
For my Savior, now I see,
And, He, smiling, waits for me;
And the angel guides are waiting;
Strains of joy, they're sweetly chanting:
Yes, they're chanting,
They are trilling
Of my Savior, while they hover;—
Of that bright *home— Nearly over!—*
Sister, weep no more for me!

THERE IS A HAVEN OF REST.

THERE'S a haven of rest; where the tree of life,
And the crystal waters with strength are rife;
Where the lillies bloom; where the fountains play
In musical strains through the ceaseless day;
Where the flowers fade not, nor leaves decay,
Where the summer reigns through eternal day.

There's a haven of rest; where the harps of gold
Are tuned for the saints of our Savior's fold;
And music floats forth from heavenly lyres,
As the strings are touched by the angel choirs:
A haven of rest; where God is the light;
And day never ends in the darkness of night.

ZEPHYR.

SWEET little zephyr, bringing balm,
Fanning away this dead, hot calm;
Laden with hope for weary one;
Kissing the cheek, so sadly wan;
Whispering of home beyond this shore,
Where weary hearts will ache no more.

Sweet little zephyr, bear away
Tidings of good, afar, to-day:
Fan the pain from the brow of care;
Nerve the good, who would do and dare;
Speak of heaven to all who mourn;
Say to the wanderer, come, return.

THE WAIL OF THE DOVES.

"NO home! no home!" was the wailing cry,
From two little doves, in the locust nigh.

"Three days ago, we came to this spot,
But our nest is gone, we find it not;
The tree, that we built in, is not here;
We have hunted for it, far and near.

"Last fall, when the winds so coldly blew;
And white frost fell, in the place of dew;
And bird-songs were hushed through forest bowers;
And silently weeping, wept the flowers;—
We took our flight to a warmer clime,
Away from the cold, the sleet, and the rime.

"We left our nest in the locust tree,
As safely hidden as nest could be-
And we thought of it with sweet delight,
All through the days of our weary flight.

"When the wintry winds no longer blew,
And earth was robed in a greener hue,
We longed again for the old, sweet spot;
We came, but Lady, our home is not.

"Our hearts are sad, for our nest was dear,
It had been *ours*, for many a year;
But our nest is gone—no home have we!"
Went up the wail from the locust tree.

The plaint had ended, away they flew
To seek a home where wild flowers grew:
But the moan remained midst leaflets there—
It lingered long on the morning air.

SUGGESTED BY SEEING TWO GARDEN CANARIES.

On December 6th, 1876.

SAY, little birds, how live ye here?
  The ground is mantled with snow,
The north winds blow so cold and drear,
  The summer flowers lie low.

"Roaming about the fir and the pine,
  Lady, sweet lady, we go,
Picking the seeds of the eglantine,
  When the warmer south winds blow."

Your mates have left for the sunny land,
  Where the leaves are fresh and green;
Where summer winds blow soft and bland,
  And beautiful flowers are seen.

"Lady, the autumn winds blew softly,
  When they said 'tis time to go,'
But, we did not heed them kindly,
  To our sorrow, now, we know."

What will ye do, when the frost-king
  Sails abroad in icy mail,
And no sounds through the forest ring,
  But the tempest's mournful wail?

"Lady, we have so sadly erred,
  But God is good, we know,
His eye is watching every bird,
  We'll trust *Him*, when wild winds blow.

"And kindly, we will cheer thy heart
  With our song, so low and sweet,
Then fly away from the crowded mart
  To our pine tree's warm retreat.

"Then, let the gathering snow-flakes fall
  Throughout the wintry day;
God over-head is watching all,
  He'll shield us, while we stray."

WINTER HAS COME!

IT snows! and the dark, leaden clouds sweep by;
The wind shrieks, then, dies in a mournful sigh;
To the gnarléd oak, the ivy still clings;
But through its crisp leaves, the hoarse wind sings,
"Winter has come!"

The pine trees bend 'neath their mantle of snow;
But their whispering music, so sad and low,
Is changed to a wail and a broken sigh,
As the wind sweeps through with a moaning cry,
"Winter has come!"

It snows! but so misty and rain-like it falls,
That dew-drops gather on the moss-grown walls;
And the rose-bush bends her head with a sigh,
As, through the dry leaves, she hears the weird cry,
"Winter has come!"

I HEAR THE HEART-THROBS OF THE YEAR.

I HEAR the heart-throbs of the year—
In the spring-time of the flowers;
In the summer's gorgeous glory;
In the brooklet's murmuring story,
Rippling through the shady bowers;
In the song-birds' tuneful singing:
In the echoes, wildly ringing
Through the golden summer-hours.

I hear the heart-throbs of the year—
In the falling of the leaves;
Falling on the tender moss-cups,—
Softly, as the crystal rain-drops
Fall upon the gathered sheaves,—
Covering up the blooming roses,
And the green and springing grasses,
While the frost his net-work weaves.

I hear the heart-throbs of the year—
In the weeping of the flowers,
Weeping by the lucid fountain,
Weeping on the lofty mountain,

Through the early golden-hours
Of the bright November morning;
Mourning *thus*, with tearless mourning,
Over autumn's frosty showers.

I hear the heart-throbs of the year—
In the snow-flakes, drifting down!
Drifting through the quiet valleys,
Drifting through the streets and alleys
Of the dim, old-fashioned town,
O'er the meadows, brown and dreary,
And the woodland, grand and hoary,
With a light and feathery crown.

I hear the heart-throbs of the year,
Growing faint and fainter still;
While the night-hours, fleetly flying,
Toll the dirge of heart-throbs dying:
Slowly, softly dies the peal:
Silently the echoes flying
Tell to all, *the year is dying*—
Dying—Death has set his seal.

THE EVENING HOUR.

WHEN in the evening, a ray of gold
From the brilliant sun, has earthward rolled;
And the prairie wild, with its flowers and grass,
Has become a sea of shimmering glass,
Which reflects the green on the azure deep,—
With many a dash, and glittering sweep
Of artist's brush o'er canvas passing,
With bright touch left in the amber tracing;—
Then, even then, is felt that soft, silent power,
Which is stealing o'er *all*, of the evening hour.

When in the forest, the murmuring rill
Sings a sad refrain with a mournful trill;
When the tree-clad hills in the distance lie
Like a purple bank on the western sky;
When the rabbit's tread is hūshed midst the leaves;
The spider, no longer, her gossamer weaves;
  Then, then in the gloaming, is felt the soft power,
  The influence unseen, of the evening hour.

When down by the oak in the blooming dell,
The sweet-scented pink and hyacinth-bell
Have folded their leaves, in dewy repose,
Round the meadow-lark's nest, where the streamlet flows;
And twilight has drawn the folds of her veil
Round the grassy mound and the lowly dale;
  Then, then in the gloaming, is felt the soft power,
  The influence unseen, of the evening hour.

When from the woodland, the whippowil's song,
In melodious strains, steals softly along;
And the dreamy hum of the insect race,
Enlivens the song with their notes of praise;
And the melody softly floats afar
On the fairy wings of the evening air;
  Then, then in the gloaming, is felt the soft power,
  The influence unseen, of the evening hour.

When in the palace and cottage bower,
The household gather for a quiet hour;
And the silvery shafts, of the moonbeams bright,
Fall aslant the floor in a flood of light;
And sweet hymns of praise and prayers ascend
To God, our Creator, our Maker and Friend;
  Then, then in the gloaming, is felt the soft power,
  The influence unseen, of the evening hour.

"MAY I LOVE YOU?"

CLARA.

THOSE words, "May I love you?" held the power
And a mystic chain, in that twilight hour,
To bind the present, the future, the past;
And tell of a *love*, that always will last.

There's a wealth in them, not of gems, nor gold;
But a truer wealth, that the heart can hold;
A wealth more precious, by far, than all
The pearls, which are culled from the ocean-hall.

They dwell in my heart with their gift of power;
And scatter their light on the midnight hour;
They speak of a love, which will never die;
For faith in our God is the binding tie.

SAD THOUGHTS PASS O'ER ME.

I STAND on the grass-crowned hill;
  Around me, the night-winds sweep
With a weird, uncanny trill;
  And a tone, which makes me weep.

And, I hear a church bell toll
  With a slow and solemn tone—
It tells, there is passing a soul
  Through the dark waves, all alone.

And sad, sad thoughts sweep o'er me,
  For I know, I, too, must die;
But, Why? for death is the key
  To a life beyond the sky.

For, by the eye of faith, I see,
  In the realms of light above,
A mansion, prepared for me
  By my heavenly Father's love.

THE LONG AGO.

I DREAM, but my dreaming is in vain;
I wake, but waking renews the pain;
I long for the sound of a voice of yore,
Whose music has ceased on this earthly shore.

I hear a step on the stairway fall;
I hear a voice in the distant hall;
But its tones are the tones of long ago,
And the step is hushed in our courts below.

NEVERMORE MAY WE TREAD ON THE BANKS OF THAT STREAM.

"I wonder, if 'our stream,' where we used to gather shells, has changed any."—*Nettie Bartholomew.*

NEVERMORE may we tread the banks of that stream,
When its waves are shining with silvery gleam;
For our feet are treading other paths in life,
Our hearts are battling in the world's stern strife.

There, a golden drift of the sunset will lay,
In the cool, dewy eve of the summer's day;
And the murmur of waves, the rustle of trees,
Will also be borne on the evening breeze.

In the spray of that stream, the beech-trees will lave,
As bending above it, their green branches wave;
And the flowers, their life will draw from its foam,
But you and I, on the broad world will roam.

Above it, the stars, bending low from the skies,
Will see the reflection of beautiful eyes;
But there are none so true to its spray-washed shore,
As you and I were, in those days of yore.

There, the robins still warble their sweetest lays,
Just as they warbled there, those far away days;
But memory oft hears a low, minor chord—
A song mingling in, with the song of the bird.

The pebbles and shells, on its gray, sandy bar,
In the sunlight may gleam and dazzle afar;
And may lure, from the homes of the world of men,
Some wanderers thence, to that lovely glen,

Who will gather and bear to the world afar,
The rose-tinted shell from that spray-washed bar;
But no others will bear, in their hearts away,
A picture to live through memory's day.

Ah! a nameless charm round that stream has been thrown;
A charm that will last till the spirit has flown;
A charm that is shared by no others beside—
Only *we* were there, in the evening tide.

LIFE ENDS NOT, WHEN TOIL IS ENDED.

TOILING, toiling, I am toiling,
  Through the radiant, summer hours;
Garlands bright of fancy weaving,
  With the meshwork of the flowers;
Typing thoughts, both pure and lovely,
  For the page so clear and fair;
While the morning sunbeams melting
  Touch my thoughts with tender care.

Toiling on, while morn is flitting
  With the dew from grass and flower,
As I cull from fleet-winged moments,
  All their grace and all their power:—
And I hoard that wealth of beauty
  For the web, I am weaving there;
While the rays of glimmering sunshine
  Tint my web with colors rare.

Toiling on, while noon-tide glory
  Tints the earth with changeful hue,
And, I gather, from the glinting,
  Drops which fall, like summer dew,
On the thoughts, so slowly growing
  In the garden of my brain,
Ripening them, with passing moment,
  Into sheaves of richest grain.

Toiling on, while evening shadows
  Gather o'er the weary land:—
Sombre hues edge brightest tintings,
  As I weave them, strand by strand—
Thus it is along life's journey,
  Shadows end the brightest day;
And the hopes of early morning
  With the shadows flit away.

Toiling on, while round our dwelling
  Lingers near the midnight hour;
And its deep and subtle charming
  Holds the toiler in its power:
Deeper thoughts of purer meaning,
  Flit athwart the toiler's brain;
Till the cup within the garner
  Overflows with golden grain.

Midnight ends the day of beauty—
  Type of life from youth to age—
Infant, childhood, manhood, passing,
  Then—the hoary-headed sage:—
Ah! the hopes of early promise
  Find not full fruition here:
Morning, noon, and evening blending,
  Then—the close of life draws near.

Life ends not, when toil is ended
  And the night of death draws near;
For the thoughts of golden promise—
  Gathered sheaves of many a year—
Dreams of childhood—hopes of manhood—
  Blend, in full fruition blest,
In the life beyond the river—
  In the realms of endless rest.

I WATCH IN THE TWILIGHT DIM, FOR THE BARKS THAT SAILED WITH ME.

I WANDER down the shelving slope;
And sit on the pebbly beach:
And I watch the clouds,
As they come and go,
With a longing hope,—
The morning will show,
That the storm has spent its wrath.

I watch the dawning of the day;
And my heart grows strong with faith;
For the stars shine forth
Where the lightning passed;
And the sky breaks through
Where the clouds were massed;
And the storm *has* spent its wrath.

I watch for the white sails, far away,
With a wild and eager trust;
For the wind has lulled
To a gentle breeze,
And the tide comes in,
From the distant seas;
And, I hope, they'll anchor soon.

I watch for the shoals of unbelief,
Where many a bark went down;
And my prayer goes up,
With an earnest plea,—
For the friends, who sail
Over time's rough sea,—
That God will be their guide.

I wander on, where the harbor lies;
And I hope, though heart grows faint,
I shall catch the sound,
As the tide goes out,
Of voices loved and dear;—
And shall hear them shout,
"*Safely anchored in the bay.*"

I watch, but my watching is in vain!
No voice responds to my call;
And the ships, that come,
Bring no news to me,
Of my missing barks,
On life's troubled sea:
And my sad heart aches with pain.

I linger still, on the shelving slope,
And the daylight fades away;
And I think, again,
Of the long ago;
And I gather up,
In the evening's glow,
Bright links of the golden past.

And I dream of that long-ago time;
Ere the storm, in fearful wrath,
Had swept o'er the heart,
And left as its dower,
Only foot-prints there,
To tell of its power;
And the hopes, lying withered there.

And, still I watch, in the twilight dim,
For the barks that sailed with me;
And I long, again,
For the days of yore,
When in child's bright morn,
From Time's sunny shore,
We sailed with the outward tide.

While yet, I linger, I catch the gleam
Of the bright lights, far away;
And my heart throbs wild,
As the cheering ray
Lights the darkening sand,
And my lonely way;
And my faith grows strong, again.

As nearer draws that beaming ray,
I hear the voices of yore;
"We are safe at last,
Though the tide goes out:—
Our anchor is firm,
So we'll sing and shout,
'*Safely anchored in the bay.*'"

I linger no longer, nor watch
For the barks, that sailed with me;
For they're safely moored,
And God is their guide,
He's their life-bark's stay;—
No ill will betide:
Saved at last, *by Christ, our Lord.*

Our Work is Not Done in a Moment's Time.

OUR work is not done in a moment's time;
But we lay the foundation, year by year,
With many a sigh, and many a tear,
As childhood is merged into manhood's prime.

We lay the foundation, then build thereon,—
By the guiding power of our Maker's hand,—
A life-work, so noble, and great, and grand,
That its record will live, when our earth-life is done.

And we pray, and we work, while the years roll on;
And we trust to Him, for help every day,
Who said, "I am the Truth, the Life, and the Way,"
Till our work is ended, and the victory won.

ASLEEP ON A BED OF ROSES.

ASLEEP on a bed of roses—
  Resting from toil and care—
With dew on her auburn tresses,
  Dew on her brow so fair.

And dew on her pale cheek lying,
  Those pearl-drops of the sky;
While the summer winds are sighing,
  "The *lovely*, too, must die."

Father, and mother, and brother,
  Seek her, but seek in vain;
She heeds not the call of her sister,
  Whose tear-drops fall like rain.

She heeds not the sound of weeping,
  Borne on the morning air;
Death has been silently reaping,
  Reaping the lovely and fair.

On a bed of Alpine roses,
  Waking no more, to weep;
Damp dew on her auburn tresses;
  Sleeping her last, long sleep.

Thus was she found in the morning
  So *life-like*, and so *fair*,
That hushed was the voice of mourning,
  For the loved one, lying there.

Asleep on a bed of roses—
  Resting from toil and care—
With dew on her auburn tresses,
  Dew on her brow so fair.

O roses, beautiful roses!
  Why pillowed ye her head,
And shed o'er her auburn tresses,
  Your petals white and red?

Did ye win her from her roaming,
  To drink your fragrance in,
In the quiet evening's gloaming
  Afar from city's din?

Did ye tell her of the danger,
  That lurked beneath the sod?
That *never* the foot of stranger
  Had trod the path she trod?

O roses, your mystic language
  Is understood by none;
This is your heaven-born heritage,
  And known to God alone.

Sleeping alone on the roses—
  Lying, so lowly, there—
With dew on her auburn tresses:
  Dew on her brow so fair.

Dew on the marble hands lying—
  Dew on a floweret rare,
Crushed in her white hand, and dying—
  Dying—as dies the fair.

On the edge of a rock, there grew,
  In beauty all alone,
That tiny flower of brilliant hue—
  She culled it for her own.

Dreaming not of the danger, that lay
  Concealed from mortal eye,
Beneath that rock, time-worn and gray,
  Which towered toward the sky.

But the fatal step was taken,
  Her form in death laid low;
And affection's chain was broken,
  As death-dews kissed her brow.

Sleeping alone on the roses,
  Waking no more, to weep,
Death-dew on her auburn tresses—
  Sleeping her last, long sleep.

THE ECHOING VOICES OF THE PAST.

AUTUMN leaves are slowly falling,
Dead and hueless, at my feet;
Sadly silent, they are saying,
"Be ye ready, death to meet."

"Death is reaping, ever reaping,"
Echo, voices of the past;
"Rouse ye, then, no longer sleeping,
Gird ye; for the work so vast."

Hark! there comes from God a message—
Borne to ear of listening man,
Sweeping down through distant ages,
"Ye are part of God's great plan."

"God hath called you, Vineyard Toilers;
And the harvest gleameth white:
Haste ye, then, before the spoiler
Reapeth there, your tiny mite.

"While the dew of morn is shining,
On the stalk, the blade, the ear;
Bind a sheaf for Jesus' kingdom;
For the harvest day is here."

ONE, GONE ABOVE.

From Class of 1870, *Granville Female College, Granville, Ohio.*

"As I stood by Lizzie's grave, I wondered, how soon the rest of us would follow."—ALICE BEACH.

EVENING shadows gathered darkly;
  Swept the prairie, far and near;
Wrapped their ebon folds around me;
  Kissed away the falling tear;
Softly touched the chain that bound me
  To the golden, memoried past;
Swept the present from my pathway;
  Led me to a hall so vast.

I was in my room no longer,
  But amid a murmuring throng;—
And I heard the sound of music;—
  And the low notes of a song:
While the walls with flowers and pictures
  Gleamed upon my wildered sight;
And before my vision floated
  Classmates, robed in snowy white.

One by one, upon the rostrum,
  Lingered *we* a moment there;
Then the benediction floated
  Forth upon the evening air;
As those words of blessing ended,
  Turned we *there*, a leaf in life;
And the future loomed before us,
  With its sterner scenes of strife.

Little dreaming as we parted,
  And our last adieus were given;
That for some, the words of welcome
  Were reserved for courts of heaven:
That the years, so fleetly flying,
  Soon would write, *One, gone above;*
That the Reaper would so early
  Cull one for the courts of Love.

Looking back, how trivial seem
  All the little scenes of strife;
When a few, brief days, at most,
  Number out this little life:
And the fleeting moments *never*
  Will return to earth again;
Gone for once, they are gone forever,
  Filled with joy or filled with pain.

Flowers will bloom, and flowers will die;
  And the years will come and go;
And each season in its passing,
  Change will mark on cheek and brow:—
Morrow comes with burden heavy;
  And the way seems dark and lone;
But we gird anew the armor
  In the faith of God alone:

And, reluctantly, we turn us,
  From the picture, memory weaves,
Taking up the thread that's broken,
  Filling up Time's unfilled leaves:
And the stars of evening shining,
  In the blue vault overhead,
Seem to light the path of angels;
  And we hear their silent tread.

And among the glorious number,
  One we see, of quiet mien;
And our true hearts turn with yearning,
  Flying o'er the space between,
Once again, to greet the lost one,
  And our broken band unite—
But the vision passes swiftly,
  Fading, in the darkening night.

Floating back upon the zephyrs
  Of the dewy summer-night,
Comes the voice, that's gone before us
  To the realms of living light;
And we know, she is looking down,
  On her classmates, here and there,
From the fields of pure Elysian,
  Where she dwells with Christ co-heir.

When we talked of heaven glorious,
  Where day reigns without a night,
Wondering oft, what life would be
  In those fields of living light;
How little thought we, that *so soon*,
  One would try those shores unknown,
Through the uplifted gates pass in,
  To our heavenly Father's throne.

But, to *all* the summons cometh;—
  Sometime—we know not when:
Growing weary, we shall pause;
  Lay aside the golden pen;
Lay the music on the table;
  Shut the organ from our sight;
Gather up the brush and palette:—
  Wait—the coming of the night.

THE ROMANCE OF A ROSE-BUD.

CLOSE by a flowing river, beside a darkening wood,
Surrounded by broad acres, a quaint old farm-house stood;
Its well kept yard and garden of peace and plenty spoke,
And songs of birds and children the slumbering echoes woke.

And there, one summer's morning, was heard the winding horn,
Its music sweetly blending with sound of waving corn;
And while its notes were ringing far down the distant glen,
From cot and hut were gathering a host of stalwart men.

And quickly through the valley, through fields of ripening wheat,
Through fields knee-deep in clover, was heard the sound of feet:
"My son," thus spoke the farmer, "I see a motley throng;
And on the air is floating the reaper's harvest song.

"The fields are ripe for harvest, the day is long and clear,
And work is done so quickly, when hearts are full of cheer;
For when with will we grapple the hard, stern work of life,
The difficulties vanish, and life with grace is rife.

"And, James, I do remember, that you are twenty-one,
So, half of all that's gathered is yours at set of sun;
But, as the grain you gather, remember this, I pray,
So God his grain will gather before the last great day.

"And through the years that follow, watch well the growing grain,
Let not a clod or furrow obstruct the falling rain;
Be watchful night and morning, though weeds seem little things,
You soon will find if suffered, they fling abroad their wings.

"For sheaves, when in the garner, do often tell this truth,
That fields which look the richest are like a wasted youth;
All show, and golden glitter, and full of promise fair,
But weeds, and lack of culture left naught of substance there.

"Then watch you in the future, and do not weary grow,
So sheaves of rarest promise with grain will ever glow,
Then in the last great harvest your life-work will display,
That moments were not wasted, your hours not thrown away.

"And, I would say, still farther, God's poor are everywhere,
Remember them, I pray you, with tender, thoughtful care;
And, when among the reapers, the gleaners may be found,
Let grain of fullest measure be scattered on the ground.

"So, when it is recorded, 'this man had talents ten,'
May heaven's garner witness, 'his ten hath gained him ten;'
For, when from gathered harvest, a tenth is set apart,
With liberal things God blesseth that true and liberal heart."

A silence fell between them, too deep their thoughts for words,
A silence left unbroken, save by the song of birds;
And eyes met eyes responsive and moist with unshed tears,
As hand grasped hand in token of help through coming years.

"Father," replied James Gardiner, "words are but feeble things
To tell my heart's deep feeling, which from its fountain springs;
But words unfitly chosen, may still be grateful words,
And fall upon the senses like song of summer birds.

"I would not speak unguarded, but as God giveth grace,
I'll heed the words of wisdom, nor falter in the race;

For 'tis by him who runneth, the prize is surely won,
If sought in humble meekness, and trusting in God's Son.

"I trust that thoughts of mercy may dwell within my heart—
For sowers, reapers, gleaners, are of this world a part;
As God holds out to each one, the cup for him to fill,
'Tis not in man to measure, one by another's skill.

"And I will seek to gather from every passing hour,
The thoughts of purest richness, and fraught with untold power;
So, when the Reaper lingers, and *bids me bind my sheaf*,
It may be filled with fruitage, as well as, faded leaf."

James Gardiner paused—the reapers were standing at the door,
And rays of golden sunshine were falling on the floor;
The farmer turned, and gathered the sickles one by one,
And said, "Henceforth, you'll listen to orders of my son."

"The hours are full of sunshine," thus spoke the farmer's son,
"And stacks of garnered richness must speak our day's work done:"
And through the fields of barley, through fields of new-mown hay,
Through fields knee-deep in clover, the reapers took their way.

The woodland echoes murmured the falling of the grain,
And tinkled through the valley like drops of falling rain,
And blent with rarest sweetness, befitting time and place,
The song of maiden singing with sad and tender grace.

"He pleads with her to listen; he has a lover's claim;
And evening zephyrs echo the calling of her name;
He pleads with her to linger, for just one moment more,
While moonbeams scatter silver around the cottage door.

"And down amidst the shadows, I see the lovers stray,
'Hearken!' the rosebuds whisper, 'to what the lovers say:'
And tender words still linger upon the evening air,
She plucks a dewy rosebud—he reads her answer there.

" O hearts, too fondly loving, the rosebuds wither too,
And naught but dust and ashes will then be left to you—
Ah yes, the thorn remaineth, O true and trusting hearts,
And where it pierces, ever, a tiny blood-drop starts."

The song had ceased, the maiden had gleaned her little store,
And binding up her bundle she sought her cottage door;
But still around the reapers, there quavered on the air
A sadly, softened echo of music, floating there.

The pearly dew-drops trembled upon the waving grain,
But James saw naught around him, heard naught but that refrain;

"Ah yes, the thorn remaineth, O true and trusting hearts,
And where it pierces, ever, a tiny blood-drop starts."

"Ah no, my little maiden, that song can ne'er be true,
There are loving hearts and faithful, *you'll* learn the lesson too:"
Then, scent of fragrant blossoms, that all around him lay,
Fell on his weary senses, and stole his heart away.

The harvest field had vanished, and in its place there laid
A yard of blooming roses, where moonbeams quivering played;
And in amidst the roses, he heard the maiden's voice,
The maiden of all maidens, which he had made his choice.

A card lay 'midst his treasures, bearing that maiden's name,
"*Maria*," then date of year—and fastened to the same
Two leaves of rarest fragrance, a rosebud kissed by dew—
They were the silent tokens, which spoke affection true.

* * * * * * *

White sheets of misty vapor were o'er the meadow flung,
Gray shadows gathered darkly the maple trees among,
As down the lane James wandered, communing with his heart,
The shadows of the forest seemed of himself a part.

He thought of all the changes, written within a year,
The strange, mysterious way, God leads his children here;
Not one of all the inmates, saving himself alone,
Was left of those who gathered around the old hearthstone.

And now, that dear old hearthstone had passed to other hands,
And *he* was an intruder upon his father's lands;
But strangest of all strange things, the man that laid the claim
Had been a friend considered, in deed, as well as name.

And yet, he held the farm-house— "tenure of right," he said—
"Which he'd left unclaimed *because* of friendship for the dead:"
And this man was George Wilder, his father's life-long friend:
But thus it is, too often, friendship to greed doth bend.

Only two years, yet darkly, had the strange shadow fell,
For death had crossed the threshold with its strange, mystic spell:
And oh, the sad, sad changes—life was not all the same—
And yet, there was one true heart—he named the maiden's name.

And while he lingered thinking, he saw the day decline,
And through the azure heavens the stars began to shine:

Ah, thus 'twill be forever, along life's hidden way,
The hours of greatest darkness God's glory will display.

He stood one moment longer, then crossed the neighboring wood—
Where maple shadows rested, a rustic cottage stood;
Its walls and window-ledges were hidden from his view,
For roses and geraniums in wild luxuriance grew.

As sweetest fragrance floated upon the evening air,
He thought of tender leaflets, of rosebud sweet and fair,
They long ago had faded, but Love could never fade—
It lives and grows the stronger, when dark misfortunes shade.

But ere he reached the gateway, a step had passed him by,
Dick Wilder's form loomed darkly against the western sky;
He thought him of the rumor, which he had heard that day—
"That house and lands do often turn maiden's thoughts away."

"Ah, no, there's too much sadness in thinking of such things—
For house and lands do often provide themselves with wings;
To-day, a home of beauty — to-morrow — where, Oh, where!—"
The dying echoes murmured, to-morrow—where, oh where!

He lingered at the threshold—he heard the maiden's voice—
It was no idle rumor—there was another choice:
The house and lands had proven a tempting, treacherous snare,
Dick Wilder and his father had robbed him,then and there.

He turned away, the moonbeams were shining bright and clear,
Yet naught was left around him of all that he held dear:
The shadows had grown colder, they lay upon his heart,
No earthly friendship, ever, could warmth again impart.

The year rolled by so fleetly, yet round the cottage door
The roses and geraniums twined ever as before:
And there, among the roses gathered the young and fair;
Dick Wilder claimed the maiden, his riches did ensnare.

The words were briefly spoken—she bore Dick Wilder's name—
And yet there was another, who had a better claim:—
It seems a strange, dark problem, that wealth can turn aside
A heart from love that's faithful, to be another's bride:

When all things are so fleeting—a day—a month—a year—
May write such sad, sad changes, and wealth may disappear:

And yet, 'tis so, too often, that friendship is as naught,
That riches and position, seem but the only thought.

None asked them of James Gardiner, save those who'd done him wrong,
They, all too well, remembered *one* missing from the throng:—
The maiden often wondered, and, sometimes, be it said,
Dick Wilder also wondered, if God would bless the deed.

And, more and more, he wondered, as year slipped after year,
And house, and land, and riches did quickly disappear,
And troubles did assail him, and health with wealth did fly,
If he had done by Gardiner, as he would be done by.

* * * * * * *

The Diamond shaft was ringing with sound of miner's pick,
And manly feet were treading where dangers clustered thick;
But one, among the workers, seemed not of them a part,
And yet, there was no better, no nobler, truer heart.

The miners often wondered at James' peculiar ways,
They said, "he seems like some one, who *has* seen better days;
He has no wife, nor kinsfolk, of *that* we all are sure,
Yet, where he spends his money, we can't conjecture, Sir.

"He never joins nor meddles with aught that's out the way,
And yet, his purse is empty when comes the day of pay,
No bank books show his savings—" how little did they know,
There're other ways of saving than what the bank books show.

Far down the Lackawanna, many and many a rood
From where the coal mine opened, a lonely cottage stood;
Its walls were dark and grimy with smoke of many a year,
And in the gathering twilight it loomed up, black and drear.

No fire was on the hearthstone; no light was on the stand;
A blighting storm blew fiercely across the open land;
And swept through crack and crevice around the little door,
Till lines of tiny snow-drifts lay on the oaken floor,

Close by the little window was drawn a broken chair,
And in it sat two children, too small, for thought of care;
And yet, one's face was furrowed with lines, so long and deep,
They told of hours of sadness, that, heart had learned to weep.

The other *one* had hardly slipped out of babyhood,
With all its winsome laughter, with all its gleesome mood,

Yet eyes told, all too plainly, that they sad vigils kept,
That sorrow, and that sadness, all through her life had crept.

"I'm cold and hungry, sister," thus spoke the little one,
"I wonder where is father, he said, 'he'd come home soon;'
And you are hungry, sister, I heard you crying too,
And then, I heard you listen—'twas only wind that blew.

"I knew you thought 'twas father, I thought so, too, at first,
And, when I found it was the wind, I thought my heart would burst,
It seems as though that never, there was so long a day,
That all the hours grew longer, since father went away."

"The day is no longer, sister, than any other day,
And yet, it does seem longer, and why, I cannot say,
Unless, because we're hungry, and cold, and all alone—
But we'll not think about it, for father will come soon.

"We'll sing a hymn together, and then, if he don't come,
We'll pray that God may keep us, and bring our father home:"
Thus spoke the elder sister, then on the still night air,
Was heard the children singing a hymn of sweetness rare.

The miners stopped and listened—strong men were they, but kind,
The little hymn had touched them, and brought sweet thoughts to mind;
It took them back to childhood, the present swept away,
And for a few brief moments, children again were they.

"There are some things, James Gardiner, I can't quite understand,
Why little children suffer throughout this wealthy land:
There are so many people have not a thought of care,
And yet, Dick Wilder's children, such heavy burdens bear."

"It does seem strange, Lee Goodwin, but we shall never know
Why some have lives of pleasure, and others, lives of woe;
God's plan we cannot fathom—His thoughts we cannot read—
But *this* we know, He knoweth that, which to us is hid."

"You said, 'Dick Wilder,' Goodwin, he wronged me, long ago,
He here—and killed—his wife, Lee? Pray tell me if you know—"
"Dick's wife? she died a year ago—to-day, 'twas Dick that fell—
What *we* shall do with the children is more than I can tell—"

The sound of human voices fell round the cottage door,
The children sprang up quickly, for strangers crossed the floor;
"Father, oh, where is father?" the lanterns dimly shone
Upon two little children, half-frozen and alone.

"Your father, little children," James' strong voice husky grew,
"Went down with crash of timbers, but I'll take care of *you*—"
He gathered the weeping children close to his aching heart,
And wrapped his cloak about them with tender, manly art.

Lee Goodwin spoke up quickly, "It is a righteous creed
Has prompted you, James Gardiner, to do this noble deed,
God bless you, Gardiner, bless you—" he closed the cottage door
And taking up his lantern, they walked across the moor.

And, when the miners wondered, as they had done before,
Lee Goodwin kept his counsel, *he* did not wonder more;
To him there had turned over a strange new leaf in life,
And answering them, he said "James' life with grace is rife.

"Go, ask those orphaned children,—whose father did go down
With crash of falling timbers, that day the roof went down,—

Who buys the bread they're eating? the fire that keeps them warm?
They'll tell you 'Mr. Gardiner, sir, he keeps us from the storm.'"

"Go, ask that widowed mother, she'll answer midst her tears,
'The heart of God is open to all our secret fears;
He has on earth some children,who follow where he leads,
Among them stands James Gardiner—'tis he supplies our needs.'

"Go down throughout the valley—*we* never sought to know
How much there was of suffering, how much there was of woe;
We only thought of pleasure, or banking all our pay,
Somehow, it seems, James Gardiner has learned a better way."

The April flowers were blooming, down in the forest dell,
And all throughout the valley, where'er the sunlight fell;
And, here and there, went pattering the sound of tiny feet,
For weary eyes were aching the April flowers to greet.

The scent of opening blossoms, upon the soft spring air,
Went through the hovel windows and left its incense there;
But *down* in the Diamond shaft no soft spring winds did blow,

Yet there, two little children were passing to and fro.

Hark! hark! an ominous sound fell on the listening ear,
A something strange, mysterious, the miners stopped in fear:
James Gardiner's pulse beat faster, but quick as flash of thought,
Beyond the fated chamber, he tossed the children out.

A fearful, blinding crash—sudden and jarring shocks—
James Gardiner's work was finished—he lay beneath the rocks:
And, when, next day, the miners tenderly bore him out,
He seemed but calmly sleeping—death had no suffering wrought.

His hand was tightly clasping a tiny pocket-book,
Lee Goodwin took and opened—but none the silence broke:
A card—two withered leaflets—a rosebud, brown and sear—
Beneath, in woman's writing—"*Maria*—" then date of year.

Three years from date of writing, another bright June morn,
James Gardiner's hand had written—"*All withered—save the thorn.*"
From eyes unused to weeping, the gathering tear-drops fell,
Death had revealed the secret that James had guarded well.

No more the miners wondered, they knew now, but too well,
The fading of his life hopes had cast that mystic spell;
That underneath that shadow his life so long had run,
And yet, when heart was bleeding, his life's best deeds were done.

VARIATIONS.

THERE'S a hidden page in each earthly life;
A page, the world sees not;
A page, that is marred in the world's stern strife,
By all, save us, forgot.

There's a minor strain in the music of life;
A strain, which tells the whole;
And its sweetest chords with sadness are rife—
'Tis the *music* of the soul.

There's an inner life and an outer life,
The *two* blend into one—
The heart leads the van through the weary strife,
Till the earthly task is done.

"BRING YE ALL THE TITHES."

Malachi III: 10

"BRING ye all the tithes to the storehouse of God,
Saith the Lord of Hosts," who the wine-press trod;
Go, gather them in, the grain in the ear,
For the day fleeth fast, the night draweth near;
And prove him this day, by your garnered tithes,
That He is not deaf to your prayers and cries:
For the windows of heaven will open wide,
A blessing descend on the Bridegroom's Bride.
Then, wait not for time, for season nor sun;
But bring them all in, ere the day is done;
For the angels' song through the arches ring,
"There is room up *here*, for the tithes ye bring."

A Call from the Western Prairies.

HARK! from the western prairies
  Cometh the cry of souls;
"In the name of our Savior help!
  O'er us a dark wave rolls."

"A wave of sin so deadly,
  That strongest hearts do quail;
And shrink from the coming conflict,
  With groan and bitter wail.

"No hand on earth can stay it,
  Unless God giveth power
And grace to meet the conflict,
  In the dark and trying hour.

"Oh, help! for souls are dying—
  Dying, for lack of bread—
And pray, that God may feed us,
  As *He* the ravens fed.

"Not with the bread that perisheth,
  Must dying souls be fed ;
But with that bread, which cometh
  From Christ, our living head.

"*Help !* for the day is fading—
  Fading away from our sight—
Darkness is gathering round us—
  Haste ! ere the coming night."

How the Gates Came Ajar.

"And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there." Rev. XXI: 25.

"THE gates shall not be shut: there shall be no night."
This mandate went forth from the God of might.

For the fight had been fought, the victory won;
And death had been vanquished by God's precious Son.

And the *grave* was robbed of its terror and gloom,
When our Savior passed through and rose from the tomb.

And when He *ascended*—God drew back the bar
And opened the gates—Christ left them ajar.

A Mystical Vision of the Burial of Time.

NIGHT'S dark pall had long been flung
Round the earth, and o'er it hung,
Like a well wrought shield of old,
Dotted o'er with gems of gold;
Shining oft with luster bright,
Making luminous the night.

Half-awake, and half-asleep,
Wandered I, o'er mountain steep;
Through the forests, dark and lone,
Quaking at the wild wind's moan;
'Cross the moorland, far and wide,
On, far on, by river-side.

Flowing darkly, all alone;
Girded in, by forest-zone;
Pausing not, but hasting on;
Dirging oft with wild, weird tone;
Flowed that river—whence it came,
Knew I not, nor what its name.—

Pale, wan starlight only showed
That near by a river flowed;
That I stood beside a rock,
Rifted by a tempest-shock,
Worn by tread of many feet,
Winter's storm, and winter's sleet.

Centuries had marked their tread,
On its weather-beaten head;
Mighty conflicts, mystic signs,
Wove and interwove with lines;
Hieroglyphics, rough and rude,
Records of the deadly feud.

Longed I, then, those signs to read,
Mighty purpose, noble deed;
Locked from gaze of mortal man,
Wild in form and weird in plan;
Symbols vague, of ages past,
Blotted by the mighty blast.

Deeming it a fruitless task,—
To unclasp the secret mask,—
While *Time* held the mystic keys
To unlock those mysteries,
With *his fingers*, sweeping o'er,
Blotting them forevermore.
Turned I, then, to river-side,
Pondering oft on things denied;

Sat me down to think awhile ;
All strange things to reconcile ;
Even the works and ways of man,
With a great and higher plan.

Moaning oft with bitter moan,
Flowed the river darkly on ;
Glimmering starlight paler shone ;
Wild winds swept in wailing tone ;
Gloomy forests darker frowned;
Shook and shuddered all the ground.

Full of wonderment untold,
Stood I, on the open wold,
Asking,—of the gloomy night,
Falling sadly on my sight,—
"What dark spirits dare molest,
Causing such a strange unrest?"

Phantoms *Three* from forest came
Trooping by, in starlight gleam.

Darker flowed the river on ;
Wailing grew the undertone ;
Fire-fly pale, o'er crested waves,
Spoke, full oft, of hidden graves,
Lying 'neath the waters dark,
Lighted by its pale, wan spark.

Wilder grew the night, and lone;
Shadows were around me thrown:
"Meaning?" asked I, then, again,
And, as often asked in vain;
Echo mocked in wild, weird tone,
Then I knew, *I was alone.*

Waning starlight showed *The Three,*
Wandering by the waters, free;
What they sought, or why they came,
What their purpose, what their scheme,
Echo deigned not to reply,—
Mocked my efforts to descry;

Night-air paused; half in pity,
Dirging, sang in wild, weird key;
Sang this song, of *Sisters Three,*
"*Time Was, Is,* and *Time Shall Be.*"—

Wilder grew my thoughts and strange,
"What"—I thought—"has wrought this change?"
Looked again, and on the sand,
Saw I, then, the *Sisters* stand:
In their hands, they bore a shroud,
Light and fleecy like a cloud;
Broidered o'er with gems and gold,
Storied relics, arms of old;
Mystic scroll, with golden thread,
Woven in, with *Time's* weird tread;

Bearing, on its snow-white shield,
Traces of a time-worn field:
Printed there, in living light,—
Growing brighter with the night,—
Were records of the unknown deeps,
Telling me, that "*Time Was*, sleeps!"
Sleeping now, in vast abyss,
Heeding not, "What meaneth this?"—

Then, I knew, they were the *Three*,
Weaving for Eternity.

Standing, ever, on Time's verge,
Chanted they this solemn dirge.

Dirge of the Three Sisters for Time Was.

"NATIONS mighty, sow and reap;
Rift asunder Alpine steep;
Pierce the clouds; through ether sweep;
Stem the tide of ocean deep:
Sowing oft in tears below,
Reaping ever, as they sow.

"They measure, too, with human pride
The Orient kingdoms' golden tide;
Isles sea-laved in beauty robed;
Diamond-depths by miners probed:

And the western Empire's skill,
Which speaks of a mighty will;
And links the land by passing thought,—
Lightning's flash with meaning fraught,—
And levels forests, tall and grand;
And gathers strength from every land.

"Yet, *we* will gather them all
From the stately Empire's hall;
Nations lofty; monarchs proud;
Gather *all* into this shroud,—
By the breath of passing wind,
All their mighty deeds rescind,—
Gather with their tale of years,
Dirging moans, and bitter tears,
Hopes all bright at setting sun,
Lives well spent; or work undone.

"*Nothing* but traditions old,
Will their history unfold:
They, in oak-ribbed chests, will lay
Hidden from the light of day:
At the bidding of *Time Is*,
They'll come forth from dark abyss;
For *Time Was*, with iron hand,
Reaches o'er the mystic strand,
'Clasps *Time Shall Be*, claims it his,
Solves the problem of *Time Is*.'
Sever *we* this tiny thread,
Lay *Time Was* among the dead."

The eternal, great unknown,
Held *Time Was*, the *overthrown*;
Clasping there, in its embrace,
High-born trust, and every grace;
Joyous hope, and noble thought;
Bravest deed with love full-fraught;
Faithful courage, mounting high,
Truth and Right to fortify:
Duty's path, even, firmly trod
To the letter of the code.

Nations mighty, young and proud,
Gathered *all* within the shroud;
Traced, as if in ocean-sand,
Foot-prints of the mighty land;—
Waymarks from the world so wide,
Borne away by ebbing tide;
Leaving not a print to show,
Of their passing to and fro.

Turned I, then, recalled weird thought,—
Full of mystery inwrought,—
Saying, o'er and o'er again,
"Sleep ye *may* from mortal ken;
Traced *ye're not* in ocean-sand,
Ye are held by Mighty Hand;—"

Looked again,—and by the gleam
Of the star-light, pale and dim,—
Weaving still another shroud,
Whiter, than the snow-white cloud,

Toiled the ancient *Sisters Three;*
Dirging low, in wild, weird key,
Of *Time Is*, a solemn lay,
Gathered from the passing day;
Moments fleeting, passing hence,
Bearing things of time and sense,
Treasures rare, from seconds culled,
Thoughts the wisest, even, annulled.

Dirge of the Three Sisters for Time Is.

"THOU child of mortality,—
On verge of eternity,—
Linger not to drape around,
Robes of purple ; monarchs found,
They brought not content nor peace,
In this world where strifes ne'er cease ;—
Linger not, thy brow to bind
With the gold from dross refined ;
Rob not ocean's water-cup,
Of her pure and pearly drop ;
Nor sea-girt isle, of golden gem
To enrich thy diadem.

"The fire-fly's pale, waning light
Even reveals, this very night,
How we *weave* with golden thread,
That *Time Is*, sleeps with the dead.

"Flitting by, another round;
Distaff is almost unwound.

"What, then, thou doest, do quickly!
Thou child of mortality!
Even now, were vision not marred;
By dark mists, thy way obscured,
Thou wouldst see,—midway between
Heaven and earth,—a graded screen.

"Justice' scales are nearly filled;
Art thou sufficiently skilled,—
When the balance has been cast,
Fleeting moments all have passed,—
To tell, how the scales will poise?
Whether filled with woes, or joys?
What the books will show of thee,
In the deep Eternity?

"Dost thou bear a high-born trust,
Garnered with thy very dust?
Hast thou left thy mark, *even now*,
Stamped upon that moment's brow?"

Naught was heard but moaning waves,
Wailing of the unseen graves;
Crested billows, restless, tossed,
Dirging for some spirit lost,—
Lost beneath their dark waves' flow,—
Dirging, weeping, solemn, low.

Clouds, dense, heavy clouds swept o'er;
Then, the river, as before,
Flowed on peaceful in its bed;
Heeding not the severed thread.

Knew I, then, it was *Time Is*,
Plunging into dark abyss:
Bearing with it, every link,
Severed on the very brink;
Broken hopes of mortal man;
Every scheme, and every plan:—
Hearing *never* one footfall,
As it bore away them all.
Wondered I, no longer, then,—
As 'twas hid from mortal ken,—
That the dark waves moaned, as *they*
Hid *Time Is*, from light of day.

Wavering starlight fainter shone;
But, I saw the rock was gone.

Mystic creeds, and mystic signs;
Hieroglyphics, weird, dark lines;

Vanished all; and, yet the *Three,*—
So stern was their dark decree,—
Wove still on, forevermore,
On that dark and dismal shore.
Wove again, another shroud,
Lighter than the fleecy cloud;
Delicate and very fine;
Golden meshwork from the mine;
Glimmering oft with fire-fly's spark,
Pale and ghastly in the dark.—

On the shroud they wove a scroll,
Written o'er, "This shall enroll
Records vast of *Time Shall Be*;
Golden mine and mystic key;
Locking up man's destiny;
In the deep eternity."

And they wove, with fatal thread,
While the night-hours waned and fled;
Answering *thus*, my wish to know,
"Why they always wove below."

Dirge of the Three Sisters for Time Shall Be.

"THOU dost stand upon the shore
Of *Time Shall Be*, evermore;

Mystic veil enshrouding thee,
We will lift that thou mayst see;
Scan thou not with eager eye!
Read thou first, that which is nigh.—

"Should thy zeal o'er-step the bound,
Thou wilt find thee, girt around;
Mystic veil will fall between
Thy own right and our domain;
Heeding not thy wish to know,
'What we weave for, here below.'

"Blindly hasting, now, to tread
Unknown depths before thee spread,
Knowing not, that round thee, lie
Brightest gems of every dye:—

"Golden moments thou hast passed,
All along thy pathway placed;
Moments full of treasures rare,—
Naught can with them ere compare:—
Unheedful, thou passed quickly by,
And no good, could e'er descry.

"*Time Shall Be*, holds mystery,
Enfolds man's destiny;—
Only *Time Was*, keeps the key,
In the deep Eternity.
When its fatal shroud we wove,
Warning, then, to thee we gave:—

"But the night is waning fast,
Sleeping in the dark, weird *past*;
Glimmering stars have paler grown,
We must finish ere the dawn—
Time Shall Be, will then, no more,
Dwell upon this darkened shore."

Ceased the chant, and ere the dawn,
Back to dark woods they had gone:
Vanished thus, the Ancient *Three*.
Knew I, then, that *Time Shall Be*,
Heard the summons, "*Leave this shore*,
For *Time Shall Be, nevermore*."

* * * * * * *

Visionary, was I, then?
This the end of mortal ken?
Saw I naught beyond this shore,
Only this, and nothing more?

Wielded, then, those *Sisters Three*,
The power that held our destiny?
Severed they, the thread of life
With its sorrows, with its strife?

Dark that creed, which gave to *Three*,—
Mortals of mortality,—
To decide man's destiny
For the great eternity.

Though so dark, that creed to us,
Fearful and ambiguous;
Yet, through all, can we not see
Him, who from Eternity
Made the beginning to blend
With the middle and the end?

Held by the Almighty's hand
Is our life; by His command
The thread is severed: and *we*
Tread the unknown Eternity.